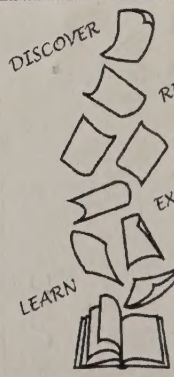

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CLOUDS OF WITNESS

by DOROTHY L. SAYERS

and

THE DOCUMENTS IN THE CASE

by DOROTHY L. SAYERS
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CLOUDS OF WITNESS

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THE SOLUTION OF

THE RIDDLESDALE MYSTERY

WITH

A REPORT

OF THE TRIAL OF

THE DUKE OF DENVER

BEFORE THE HOUSE OF LORDS

FOR

MURDER

The inimitable stories of Tong-king never have any real ending, and this one, being in his most elevated style, has even less end than most of them. But the whole narrative is permeated with the odour of joss-sticks and honourable high-mindedness, and the two characters are both of noble birth.

—*The Wallet of Kai-Lung.*

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CLOUDS OF WITNESS

CHAPTER I

" OF HIS MALICE AFORETHOUGHT "

O, who hath done this deed?
—Othello.

LORD PETER WIMSEY stretched himself luxuriously between the sheets provided by the Hôtel Meurice. After his exertions in the unravelling of the Battersea Mystery, he had followed Sir Julian Freke's advice and taken a holiday. He had felt suddenly weary of breakfasting every morning before his view over the Green Park ; he had realised that the picking up of first editions at sales afforded insufficient exercise for a man of thirty-three ; the very crimes of London were over-sophisticated. He had abandoned his flat and his friends and fled to the wilds of Corsica. For the last three months he had forsworn letters, newspapers, and telegrams. He had tramped about the mountains, admiring from a cautious distance the wild beauty of Corsican peasant-women, and studying the vendetta in its natural haunt. In such conditions murder seemed not only reasonable, but lovable. Bunter, his confidential man and assistant sleuth, had nobly sacrificed his civilised habits, had let his master go dirty and even unshaven, and had turned his faithful camera from the recording of finger-prints to that of craggy scenery. It had been very refreshing.

Now, however, the call of the blood was upon Lord Peter. They had returned late last night in a vile train

to Paris, and had picked up their luggage. The autumn light, filtering through the curtains, touched caressingly the silver-topped bottles on the dressing-table, outlined an electric lamp-shade and the shape of the telephone. A noise of running water near by proclaimed that Bunter had turned on the bath (h. & c.) and was laying out scented soap, bath-salts, the huge bath-sponge, for which there had been no scope in Corsica, and the delightful flesh-brush with the long handle, which rasped you so agreeably all down the spine. "Contrast," philosophised Lord Peter sleepily, "is life. Corsica—Paris—then London. . . . Good morning, Bunter."

"Good morning, my lord. Fine morning, my lord. Your lordship's bath-water is ready."

"Thanks," said Lord Peter. He blinked at the sunlight.

It was a glorious bath. He wondered, as he soaked in it, how he could have existed in Corsica. He wallowed happily and sang a few bars of a song. In a soporific interval he heard the valet de chambre bringing in coffee and rolls. Coffee and rolls! He heaved himself out with a splash, towelled himself luxuriously, enveloped his long-mortified body in a silken bath-robe and wandered back.

To his immense surprise he perceived Mr. Bunter calmly replacing all the fittings in his dressing-case. Another astonished glance showed him the bags—scarcely opened the previous night—repacked, relabelled and standing ready for a journey.

"I say, Bunter, what's up?" said his lordship. "We're stayin' here a fortnight y'know."

"Excuse me, my lord," said Mr. Bunter, deferentially, "but, having seen *The Times* (delivered here every morning by air, my lord; and very expeditious I'm sure all things considered), I made no doubt your lordship would be wishing to go to Riddlesdale at once."

"Riddlesdale!" exclaimed Peter. "What's the matter? Anything wrong with my brother?"

For answer Mr. Bunter handed him the paper, folded open at the heading :

RIDDLESDALE INQUEST.
DUKE OF DENVER ARRESTED
ON MURDER CHARGE.

Lord Peter stared as if hypnotised.

"I thought your lordship wouldn't wish to miss anything," said Mr. Bunter, "so I took the liberty——"

Lord Peter pulled himself together.

"When's the next train?" he asked.

"I beg your lordship's pardon—I thought your lordship would wish to take the quickest route. I took it on myself to book two seats in the aeroplane *Victoria*. She starts at 11.30."

Lord Peter looked at his watch.

"Ten o'clock," he said. "Very well. You did quite right. Dear me! Poor old Gerald arrested for murder. Uncommonly worryin' for him, poor chap. Always hated my bein' mixed up with police-courts. Now he's here himself. Lord Peter Wimsey in the witness-box—very distressin' to feelin's of a brother. Duke of Denver in the dock—worse still. Dear me! Well, I suppose one must have breakfast."

"Yes, my lord. Full account of the inquest in the paper, my lord."

"Yes. Who's on the case, by the way?"

"Mr. Parker, my lord."

"Parker? That's good. Splendid old Parker! Wonder how he managed to get put on to it. How do things look, Bunter?"

"If I may say so, my lord, I fancy the investigations will prove very interesting. There are several extremely suggestive points in the evidence, my lord."

"From a criminological point of view I daresay it is interesting," replied his lordship, sitting down cheerfully to his *café au lait*, "but it's deuced awkward for my

brother, all the same, havin' no turn for criminology what ? "

" Ah, well ! " said Mr. Bunter, " they say, my lord there's nothing like having a personal interest."

. . . . .

" The inquest was held to-day at Riddlesdale, in the North Riding of Yorkshire, on the body of Captain Denis Cathcart, which was found at three o'clock on Thursday morning lying just outside the conservatory door of the Duke of Denver's shooting-box, Riddlesdale Lodge. Evidence was given to show that deceased had quarrelled with the Duke of Denver on the preceding evening, and was subsequently shot in a small thicket adjoining the house. A pistol belonging to the Duke was found near the scene of the crime. A verdict of murder was returned against the Duke of Denver. Lady Mary Wimsey, sister of the Duke who was engaged to be married to the deceased, collapsed after giving evidence, and is now lying seriously ill at the Lodge. The Duchess of Denver hastened from town yesterday and was present at the inquest. Full report on p. 12."

" Poor old Gerald ! " thought Lord Peter, as he turned to page 12 ; " and poor old Mary ! I wonder if she really was fond of the fellow. Mother always said not, but Mary never would let on about herself."

The full report began by describing the little village of Riddlesdale, where the Duke of Denver had recently taken a small shooting-box for the season. When the tragedy occurred the Duke had been staying there with a party of guests. In the Duchess's absence Lady Mary Wimsey had acted as hostess. The other guests were Colonel and Mrs. Marchbanks, the Hon. Frederick Arbuthnot, Mr. and Mrs. Pettigrew-Robinson, and the dead man, Denis Cathcart.

The first witness was the Duke of Denver, who laimed to have discovered the body. He gave evidence hat he was coming into the house by the conservatory loor at three o'clock in the morning of Thursday, October 14th, when his foot struck against something. He had switched on his electric torch and seen the body f Denis Cathcart at his feet. He had at once turned it ver, and seen that Cathcart had been shot in the chest. He was quite dead. As Denver was bending over the ody, he heard a cry in the conservatory, and, looking p, saw Lady Mary Wimsey gazing out horror-struck. She came out by the conservatory door, and exclaimed t once, " O God, Gerald, you've killed him ! " (Sen-ation.)*

The Coroner : " Were you surprised by that remark?"

Duke of D. : " Well, I was so shocked and surprised at he whole thing. I think I said to her, ' Don't look,' nd she said, ' Oh, it's Denis ! Whatever can have hap-ened ? Has there been an accident ? ' I stayed with he body, and sent her up to rouse the house."

The Coroner : " Did you expect to see Lady Mary Vimsey in the conservatory ? "

Duke of D. : " Really, as I say, I was so astonished all ound, don't you know, I didn't think about it."

The Coroner : " Do you remember how she was ressed ? "

Duke of D. : " I don't think she was in her pyjamas." Laughter.) " I think she had a coat on."

The Coroner : " I understand that Lady Mary Wim-ey was engaged to be married to the deceased ? '

Duke of D. : " Yes."

The Coroner : " He was well known to you ? "

Duke of D. : " He was the son of an old friend of my ather's ; his parents are dead. I believe he lived chiefly broad. I ran across him during the war, and in 1919

*This report, though substantially the same as that read by Lord Peter *The Times*, has been corrected, amplified and annotated from the horthand report made at the time by Mr. Parker.

he came to stay at Denver. He became engaged to my sister at the beginning of this year."

The Coroner: "With your consent, and with that of the family?"

Duke of D.: "Oh, yes, certainly."

The Coroner: "What kind of man was Captain Cathcart?"

Duke of D.: "Well—he was a Sahib and all that. I don't know what he did before he joined in 1914. I think he lived on his income; his father was well off. Crack shot, good at games, and so on. I never heard anything against him—till that evening."

The Coroner: "What was that?"

Duke of D.: "Well—the fact is—it was deuced queer. He—— If anybody but Tommy Freeborn had said it I should never have believed it." (Sensation.)

The Coroner: "I'm afraid I must ask your grace of what exactly you had to accuse the deceased."

Duke of D.: "Well, I didn't—I don't—exactly accuse him. An old friend of mine made a suggestion. Of course I thought it must be all a mistake, so I went to Cathcart, and, to my amazement, he practically admitted it! Then we both got angry, and he told me to go to the devil, and rushed out of the house." (Renewed sensation.)

The Coroner: "When did this quarrel occur?"

Duke of D.: "On Wednesday night. That was the last I saw of him." (Unparalleled sensation.)

The Coroner: "Please, please, we cannot have this disturbance. Now, will your grace kindly give me, as far as you can remember it, the exact history of this quarrel?"

Duke of D.: "Well, it was like this. We'd had a long day on the moors and had dinner early, and about half past nine we began to feel like turning in. My sister and Mrs. Pettigrew-Robinson toddled on up, and we were havin' a last peg in the billiard-room when Fleming—that's my man—came in with the letters. They com-

rather any old time in the evening, you know, we being wo and a half miles from the village. No—I wasn't in he billiard-room at the time—I was lockin' up the gun-oom. The letter was from an old friend of mine I hadn't een for years—Tom Freeborn—used to know him at he House——"

The Coroner: "Whose house?"

Duke of D.: "Oh, Christ Church, Oxford. He vrote to say he'd seen the announcement of my sister's ngagement in Egypt."

The Coroner: "In Egypt?"

Duke of D.: "I mean, *he* was in Egypt—Tom Free-born, you see—that's why he hadn't written before. He ngineers. He went out there after the war was over, ou see, and, bein' somewhere up near the sources of he Nile, he doesn't get the papers regularly. He said, vould I 'scuse him for interferin' in a very delicate natter, and all that, but did I know who Cathcart was? Said he'd met him in Paris during the war, and he lived y cheatin' at cards—said he could swear to it, with letails of a row there'd been in some French place or ther. Said he knew I'd want to chaw his head off—reeborn's, I mean—for buttin' in, but he'd seen the nan's photo in the paper, an' he thought I ought to now."

The Coroner: "Did this letter surprise you?"

Duke of D.: "Couldn't believe it at first. If it hadn't een old Tom Freeborn I'd have put the thing in the ire straight off, and, even as it was, I didn't quite know vhat to think. I mean, it wasn't as if it had happened n England, you know. I mean to say, Frenchmen get o excited about nothing. Only there was Freeborn, nd he isn't the kind of man that makes mistakes."

The Coroner: "What did you do?"

Duke of D.: "Well, the more I looked at it the less I ked it, you know. Still, I couldn't quite leave it like nat, so I thought the best way was to go straight to Cathcart. They'd all gone up while I was sittin' thinkin'

about it, so I went up and knocked at Cathcart's door. He said, 'What's that?' or 'Who the devil's that?' or somethin' of the sort, and I went in. 'Look here,' I said, 'can I just have a word with you?' 'Well, cut it short, then,' he said. I was surprised—he wasn't usually rude. 'Well,' I said, 'fact is, I've had a letter I don't much like the look of, and I thought the best thing to do was to bring it straight away to you an' have the whole thing cleared up. It's from a man—a very decent sort—old college friend, who says he's met you in Paris.' 'Paris!' he said, in a most uncommonly unpleasant way. 'Paris! What the hell do you want to come talkin' to me about Paris for?' 'Well,' I said, 'don't talk like that, because it's misleadin' under the circumstances.' 'What are you drivin' at?' says Cathcart. 'Spit it out and go to bed, for God's sake.' I said, 'Right oh! I will. It's a man called Freeborn, who says he knew you in Paris and that you made money cheatin' at cards.' I thought he'd break out at that, but all he said was, 'What about it?' 'What about it?' I said. 'Well, of course, it's not the sort of thing I'm goin' to believe like that, right bang-slap off, without any proofs.' Then he said a funny thing. He said, 'Beliefs don't matter—it's what one *knows* about people.' 'Do you mean to say you don't deny it?' I said. 'It's no good my denying it,' he said 'you must make up your own mind. Nobody could *dis*prove it.' And then he suddenly jumped up, nearly knocking the table over, and said, 'I don't care what you think or what you do, if you'll only get out. For God's sake leave me alone!' 'Look here,' I said, 'you needn't take it that way. I don't say I do believe it—in fact,' I said, 'I'm sure there must be some mistake only, you bein' engaged to Mary,' I said, 'I couldn't just let it go at that without looking into it, could I?' 'Oh!' says Cathcart, 'if that's what's worrying you, it needn't. That's off.' I said, 'What?' He said, 'Our engagement.' 'Off?' I said. 'But I was talking to Mary about it only yesterday.' 'I haven't told her yet

ne said. 'Well,' I said, 'I think that's damned cool. Who the hell do you think you are, to come here and jilt my sister?' Well, I said quite a lot, first and last. 'You can get out,' I said; 'I've no use for swine like you.' I will,' he said, and he pushed past me an' slammed downstairs and out of the front door, an' banged it after him."

The Coroner: "What did you do?"

Duke of D.: "I ran into my bedroom, which has a window over the conservatory, and shouted out to him not to be a silly fool. It was pourin' with rain and beastly cold. He didn't come back, so I told Fleming to leave the conservatory door open—in case he thought better of it—and went to bed."

The Coroner: "What explanation can you suggest for Cathcart's behaviour?"

Duke of D.: "None. I was simply staggered. But I think he must somehow have got wind of the letter, and knew the game was up."

The Coroner: "Did you mention the matter to anybody else?"

Duke of D.: "No. It wasn't pleasant, and I thought I'd better leave it till the morning."

The Coroner: "So you did nothing further in the matter?"

Duke of D.: "No. I didn't want to go out huntin' for the fellow. I was too angry. Besides, I thought he'd change his mind before long—it was a brute of a night and he'd only a dinner-jacket."

The Coroner: "Then you just went quietly to bed and never saw deceased again?"

Duke of D.: "Not till I fell over him outside the conservatory at three in the morning."

The Coroner: "Ah yes. Now can you tell us how you came to be out of doors at that time?"

Duke of D. (hesitating): "I didn't sleep well. I went out for a stroll."

The Coroner: "At three o'clock in the morning?"

Duke of D.: "Yes." With sudden inspiration: "You see, my wife's away." (Laughter and some remarks from the back of the room.)

The Coroner: "Silence, please. . . . You mean to say that you got up at that hour of an October night to take a walk in the garden in the pouring rain?"

Duke of D.: "Yes, just a stroll." (Laughter.)

The Coroner: "At what time did you leave your bedroom?"

Duke of D.: "Oh—oh, about half-past two, I should think."

The Coroner: "Which way did you go out?"

Duke of D.: "By the conservatory door."

The Coroner: "The body was not there when you went out?"

Duke of D.: "Oh, no!"

The Coroner: "Or you would have seen it?"

Duke of D.: "Lord, yes! I'd have had to walk over it."

The Coroner: "Exactly where did you go?"

Duke of D. (vaguely): "Oh, just round about."

The Coroner: "You heard no shot?"

Duke of D.: "No."

The Coroner: "Did you go far away from the conservatory door and the shrubbery?"

Duke of D.: "Well—I was some way away. Perhaps that's why I didn't hear anything. It must have been."

The Coroner: "Were you as much as a quarter of a mile away?"

Duke of D.: "I should think I was—oh, yes, quite!"

The Coroner: "More than a quarter of a mile away?"

Duke of D.: "Possibly. I walked about briskly because it was cold."

The Coroner: "In which direction?"

Duke of D. (with visible hesitation): "Round the back of the house. Towards the bowling-green."

The Coroner: "The bowling-green?"

Duke of D. (more confidently) : " Yes."

The Coroner : " But if you were more than a quarter f a mile away, you must have left the grounds ? "

Duke of D. : " I—oh, yes—I think I did. Yes, I valked about on the moor a bit, you know."

The Coroner : " Can you show us the letter you had rom Mr. Freeborn ? "

Duke of D. : " Oh, certainly—if I can find it. I hought I put it in my pocket, but I couldn't find it or that Scotland Yard fellow."

The Coroner : " Can you have accidentally destroyed ? "

Duke of D. : " No—I'm sure I remember putting —— Oh "—here the witness paused in very patent onfusion, and grew red—" I remember now. I estroyed it."

The Coroner : " That is unfortunate. How was hat ? "

Duke of D. : " I had forgotten ; it has come back to e now. I'm afraid it has gone for good."

The Coroner : " Perhaps you kept the envelope ? " Witness shook his head.

The Coroner : " Then you can show the jury no roof of having received it ? "

Duke of D. : " Not unless Fleming remembers it."

The Coroner : " Ah, yes ! No doubt we can check that way. Thank you, your grace. Call Lady Mary imsey."

The noble lady, who was, until the tragic morning of ctober 14th, the fiancée of the deceased, aroused a urmur of sympathy on her appearance. Fair and ender, her naturally rose-pink cheeks ashy pale, she emed overwhelmed with grief. She was dressed tirely in black, and gave her evidence in a very low ne which was at times almost inaudible.*

After expressing his sympathy, the coroner asked, How long had you been engaged to the deceased ? "

* From the newspaper report—*not* Mr. Parker.

Witness : " About eight months."

The Coroner : " Where did you first meet him ? "

Witness : " At my sister-in-law's house in London."

The Coroner : " When was that ? "

Witness : " I think it was June last year."

The Coroner : " You were quite happy in your engagement ? "

Witness : " Quite."

The Coroner : " You naturally saw a good deal of Captain Cathcart. Did he tell you much about his previous life ? "

Witness : " Not very much. We were not given to mutual confidences. We usually discussed subjects of common interest."

The Coroner : " You had many such subjects ? "

Witness : " Oh, yes."

The Coroner : " You never gathered at any time that Captain Cathcart had anything on his mind ? "

Witness : " Not particularly. He had seemed a little anxious the last few days."

The Coroner : " Did he speak of his life in Paris ? "

Witness : " He spoke of theatres and amusements there. He knew Paris very well. I was staying in Paris with some friends last February, when he was there, and he took us about. That was shortly after our engagement."

The Coroner : " Did he ever speak of playing cards in Paris ? "

Witness : " I don't remember."

The Coroner : " With regard to your marriage—has any money settlements been gone into ? "

Witness : " I don't think so. The date of the marriage was not in any way fixed."

The Coroner : " He always appeared to have plenty of money ? "

Witness : " I suppose so ; I didn't think about it."

The Coroner : " You never heard him complain of being hard up ? "

Witness: "Everybody complains of that, don't hey?"

The Coroner: "Was he a man of cheerful disposiion?"

Witness: "He was very moody, never the same two lays together."

The Coroner: "You have heard what your brother ays about the deceased wishing to break off the engagement. Had you any idea of this?"

Witness: "Not the slightest."

The Coroner: "Can you think of any explanation ow?"

Witness: "Absolutely none."

The Coroner: "There had been no quarrel?"

Witness: "No."

The Coroner: "So far as you knew, on the Wedesday evening, you were still engaged to deceased with very prospect of being married to him shortly?"

Witness: "Ye-es. Yes, certainly, of course."

The Coroner: "He was not—forgive me this very ainful question—the sort of man who would have been kely to lay violent hands on himself?"

Witness: "Oh, I never thought—well, I don't know—suppose he might have done. That would explain it, ouldn't it?"

The Coroner: "Now, Lady Mary—please don't istress yourself, take your own time—will you tell us xactly what you heard and saw on Wednesday night nd Thursday morning."

Witness: "I went up to bed with Mrs. Marchbanks nd Mrs. Pettigrew-Robinson at about half-past nine, aving all the men downstairs. I said good night to enis, who seemed quite as usual. I was not downairs when the post came. I went to my room at once. y room is at the back of the house. I heard Mr. ettigrew-Robinson come up at about ten. The Pettiew-Robinsons sleep next door to me. Some of the her men came up with him. I did not hear my

brother come upstairs. At about a quarter past ten I heard two men talking loudly in the passage, and then I heard someone run downstairs and bang the front door. Afterwards I heard rapid steps in the passage, and finally I heard my brother shut his door. Then I went to bed."

The Coroner: "You did not inquire the cause of the disturbance?"

Witness (indifferently): "I thought it was probably something about the dogs."

The Coroner: "What happened next?"

Witness: "I woke up at three o'clock."

The Coroner: "What wakened you?"

Witness: "I heard a shot."

The Coroner: "You were not awake before you heard it?"

Witness: "I may have been partly awake. I heard it very distinctly. I was sure it was a shot. I listened for a few minutes, and then went down to see if anything was wrong."

The Coroner: "Why did you not call your brother or some other gentleman?"

Witness (scornfully): "Why should I? I thought it was probably only poachers, and I didn't want to make an unnecessary fuss at that unearthly hour."

The Coroner: "Did the shot sound close to the house?"

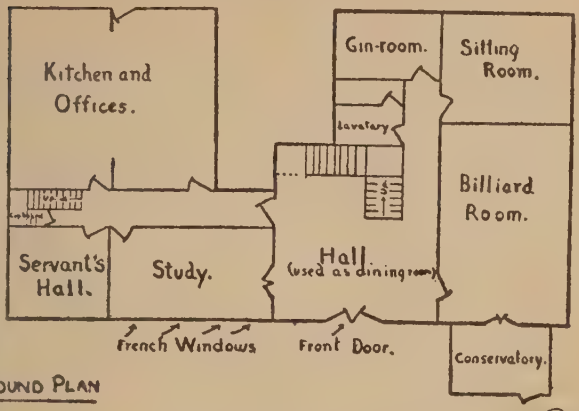
Witness: "Fairly, I think—it is hard to tell when one is wakened by a noise—it always sounds so extra loud."

The Coroner: "It did not seem to be in the house or in the conservatory?"

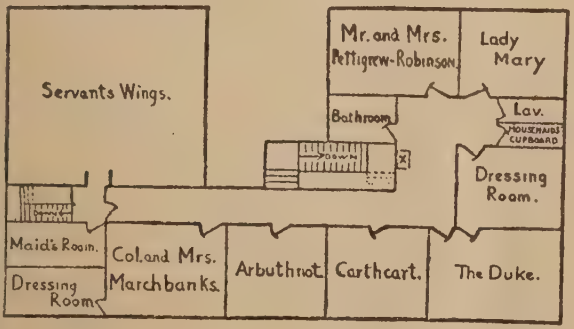
Witness: "No it was outside."

The Coroner: "So you went downstairs by yourself. That was very plucky of you, Lady Mary. Did you go immediately?"

Witness: "Not quite immediately. I thought I over for a few minutes; then I put on walking-shoes over bare feet, a heavy covert-coat, and a woolly ca



GROUND PLAN



x.– Old Oak Chest.

may have been five minutes after hearing the shot at I left my bedroom. I went downstairs and through e billiard-room to the conservatory."

The Coroner: "Why did you go out that way?"

Witness: "Because it was quicker than unbolting her the front door or the back door."

At this point a plan of Riddlesdale Lodge was handed

to the jury. It is a roomy, two-storied house, built in a plain style, and leased by the present owner, Mr. Walter Montague, to Lord Denver for the season, Mr. Montague being in the States.

Witness (resuming): "When I got to the conservatory door I saw a man outside, bending over something on the ground. When he looked up I was astonished to see my brother."

The Coroner: "Before you saw who it was, what did you expect?"

Witness: "I hardly know—it all happened so quickly. I thought it was burglars, I think."

The Coroner: "His grace has told us that when you saw him you cried out, 'O God! you've killed him!' Can you tell us why you did that?"

Witness (very pale): "I thought my brother must have come upon the burglar and fired at him in self-defence—that is, if I thought at all."

The Coroner: "Quite so. You knew that the Duke possessed a revolver?"

Witness: "Oh, yes—I think so."

The Coroner: "What did you do next?"

Witness: "My brother sent me up to get help. I knocked up Mr. Arbuthnot and Mr. and Mrs. Pettigrew-Robinson. Then I suddenly felt very faint, and went back to my bedroom and took some sal volatile."

The Coroner: "Alone?"

Witness: "Yes, everybody was running about and calling out. I couldn't bear it—I——"

Here the witness, who up till this moment had given her evidence every collectedly, though in a low voice, collapsed suddenly, and had to be assisted from the room.

The next witness called was James Fleming, the man servant. He remembered having brought the letter from Riddlesdale at 9.45 on Wednesday evening. He had taken three or four letters to the Duke in the gun room. He could not remember at all whether one o

hem had had an Egyptian stamp. He did not collect tamps; his hobby was autographs.

The Hon. Frederick Arbuthnot then gave evidence. Ie had gone up to bed with the rest at a little before en. He had heard Denver come up by himself some me later—couldn't say how much later—he was rushing his teeth at the time. (Laughter.) Had ertainly heard loud voices and a row going on next oor and in the passage. Had heard somebody go for ie stairs hell-for-leather. Had stuck his head out and en Denver in the passage. Had said," Hello, Denver, hat's the row?" The Duke's reply had been inaudible. enver had bolted into his bedroom and shouted out of e window, " Don't be an ass, man!" He had seemed ry angry indeed, but the Hon. Freddy attached no nportance to that. One was always getting across enver, but it never came to anything. More dust than ck in his opinion. Hadn't known Cathcart long—ways found him all right—no, he didn't *like* Cathcart, it he was all right, you know, nothing wrong about m that he knew of. Good lord, no, he'd never heard suggested he cheated at cards! Well, no, of course, he dn't go about looking out for people cheating at cards it wasn't a thing one expected. He'd been had that y in a club at Monte once—he'd had no hand in inging it to light—hadn't noticed anything till the fun gan. Had not noticed anything particular in Cathcart's nner to Lady Mary, or hers to him. Didn't suppose ever would notice anything; did not consider him-f an observing sort of man. Was not interfering by ture; had thought Wednesday evening's dust-up none his business. Had gone to bed and to sleep.

The Coroner: " Did you hear anything further that ht?"

Hon. Frederick: " Not till poor little Mary knocked up. Then I toddled down and found Denver in the servatory, bathing Cathcart's head. We thought we ght to clean the gravel and mud off his face, you know."

The Coroner: "You heard no shot?"

Hon. Frederick: "Not a sound. But I sleep pretty heavily."

Colonel and Mrs. Marchbanks slept in the room over what was called the study—more a sort of smoking-room really. They both gave the same account of a conversation which they had had at 11.30. Mrs. Marchbanks had sat up to write some letters after the Colonel was in bed. They had heard voices and someone running about, but had paid no attention. It was not unusual for members of the party to shout and run about. At last the Colonel had said, "Come to bed, my dear, it's half-past eleven, and we're making an early start tomorrow. You won't be fit for anything." He said this because Mrs. Marchbanks was a keen sportswoman and always carried her gun with the rest. She replied, "I'm just coming." The Colonel said, "You're the only sinner burning the midnight oil—everybody's turned in." Mrs. Marchbanks replied, "No, the Duke's still up; I can hear him moving about in the study." Colonel Marchbanks listened and heard it too. Neither of them heard the Duke come up again. They had heard no noise of any kind in the night.

Mr. Pettigrew-Robinson appeared to give evidence with extreme reluctance. He and his wife had gone to bed at ten. They had heard the quarrel with Cathcart. Mr. Pettigrew-Robinson, fearing that something might be going to happen, opened his door in time to hear the Duke say, "If you dare to speak to my sister again I'll break every bone in your body," or words to that effect. Cathcart had rushed downstairs. The Duke was scarlet in the face. He had not seen Mr. Pettigrew-Robinson, but had spoken a few words to Mr. Arbuthnot and rushed into his own bedroom. Mr. Pettigrew-Robinson had run out, and said to Mr. Arbuthnot, "I say, Arbuthnot," and Mr. Arbuthnot had very rudely slammed the door in his face. He had then gone to the Duke's door and said, "I say, Denver." The Duke had

ome out, pushing past him, without even noticing him, nd gone to the head of the stairs. He had heard him ell Fleming to leave the conservatory door open, as Mr. athcart had gone out. The Duke had then returned. Ir. Pettigrew-Robinson had tried to catch him as he assed, and had said again, "I say, Denver, what's up?" he Duke had said nothing, and had shut his bedroom oor with great decision. Later on, however, at 11.30 be precise, Mr. Pettigrew-Robinson had heard the uke's door open, and stealthy feet moving about the assage. He could not hear whether they had gone ownstairs. The bathroom and lavatory were at his nd of the passage, and, if anybody had entered either them, he thought he should have heard. He had not eard the footsteps return. He had heard his travelling ock strike twelve before falling asleep. There was no istaking the Duke's bedroom door, as the hinge creaked a peculiar manner.

Mrs. Pettigrew-Robinson confirmed her husband's idence. She had fallen asleep before midnight, and d slept heavily. She was a heavy sleeper at the begin- ng of the night, but slept lightly in the early morning. e had been annoyed by all the disturbance in the house at evening, as it had prevented her from getting off. fact, she had dropped off about 10.30, and Mr. ttigrew-Robinson had had to wake her an hour after tell her about the footsteps. What with one thing d another she only got a couple of hours' good sleep. e woke up again at two, and remained broad awake l the alarm was given by Lady Mary. She could ear positively that she heard no shot in the night. Her ndow was next to Lady Mary's, on the opposite side m the conservatory. She had always been accus- ned from a child to sleep with her window open. In ly to a question from the Coroner, Mrs. Pettigrew- binson said she had never felt there was a real, true ection between Lady Mary Wimsey and deceased. ey seemed very off-hand, but that sort of thing was

the fashion nowadays. She had never heard of any disagreement.

Miss Lydia Cathcart, who had been hurriedly summoned from town, then gave evidence about the deceased man. She told the Coroner that she was the Captain's aunt and his only surviving relative. She had seen very little of him since he came into possession of his father's money. He had always lived with his own friends in Paris, and they were such as she could not approve of.

"My brother and I never got on very well," said Miss Cathcart, "and he had my nephew educated abroad till he was eighteen. I fear Denis's notions were always quite French. After my brother's death Denis went to Cambridge, by his father's desire. I was left executrix of the will, and guardian till Denis came of age. I do not know why, after neglecting me all his life, my brother should have chosen to put such a responsibility upon me at his death, but I did not care to refuse. My house was open to Denis during his holidays from college, but he preferred, as a rule, to go and stay with his rich friends. I cannot now recall any of their names. When Denis was twenty-one he came into £10,000 a year. I believe it was in some kind of foreign property. I inherited a certain amount under the will as executrix, but I converted it all, at once, into good, sound, British securities. I cannot say what Denis did with his. It would not surprise me at all to hear that he had been cheating at cards. I have heard that the persons he consorted with in Paris were most undesirable. I never met any of them. I have never been in France."

John Hardraw, the gamekeeper, was next called. He and his wife inhabit a small cottage just inside the gate of Riddlesdale Lodge. The grounds, which measure twenty acres or so, are surrounded at this point by a strong paling; the gate is locked at night. Hardraw stated that he had heard a shot fired at about ten minutes to twelve on Wednesday night, close to the

ottage, as it seemed to him. Behind the cottage are ten res of preserved plantation. He supposed that there ere poachers about; they occasionally came in after ares. He went out with his gun in that direction, but w nobody. He returned home at one o'clock by his atch.

The Coroner: "Did you fire your gun at any me?"

Witness: "No."

The Coroner: "You did not go out again?"

Witness: "I did not."

The Coroner: "Nor hear any other shots?"

Witness: "Only that one; but I fell asleep after got back, and was wakened up by the chauffeur going it for the doctor. That would be at about a quarter ist three."

The Coroner: "Is it not unusual for poachers to oot so very near the cottage?"

Witness: "Yes, rather. If poachers do come, it usually on the other side of the preserve, towards e moor."

Dr. Thorpe gave evidence of having been called to e deceased. He lived in Stapley, nearly fourteen iles from Riddlesdale. There was no medical man in ddlesdale. The chauffeur had knocked him up at 45 a.m., and he had dressed quickly and come with him once. They were at Riddlesdale Lodge at half-past ur. Deceased, when he saw him, he judged to have en dead three or four hours. The lungs had been erced by a bullet, and death had resulted from loss of ood, and suffocation. Death would not have resulted mediately—deceased might have lingered some time. e had made a post-mortem investigation, and found at the bullet had been deflected from a rib. There is nothing to show whether the wound had been self-flicted or fired from another hand, at close quarters. here were no other marks of violence.

Inspector Craikes from Stapley had been brought

back in the car with Dr. Thorpe. He had seen the body It was then lying on its back, between the door of th conservatory and the covered well just outside. As soo as it became light, Inspector Craikes had examined th house and grounds. He had found bloody marks al along the path leading to the conservatory, and signs a though a body had been dragged along. This path ra into the main path leading from the gate to the fron door. (Plan produced.) Where the two paths joined, shrubbery began, and ran down on both sides of th path to the gate and the gamekeeper's cottage. Th blood-tracks had led to a little clearing in the middle c the shrubbery, about half-way between the house an the gate. Here the inspector found a great pool c blood, a handkerchief soaked in blood, and a revolve The handkerchief bore the initials D. C., and the revolve was a small weapon of American pattern, and bore n mark. The conservatory door was open when th Inspector arrived, and the key was inside.

Deceased, when he saw him, was in dinner-jacket an pumps, without hat or overcoat. He was wet throug and his clothes, besides being much blood-stained, we very muddy and greatly disordered through the draggin of the body. The pocket contained a cigar-case and small, flat pocket-knife. Deceased's bedroom had bee searched for papers, etc., but so far nothing had bee found to shed very much light on his circumstances.

The Duke of Denver was then recalled.

The Coroner: "I should like to ask your gra whether you ever saw deceased in possession of revolver?"

Duke of D.: "Not since the war."

The Coroner: "You do not know if he carried o about with him?"

Duke of D.: "I have no idea."

The Coroner: "You can make no guess, I suppos to whom this revolver belongs?"

Duke of D. (in great surprise): "That's my revolv

ut of the study table drawer. How did you get
d of that ? "—(Sensation.)
The Coroner : " You are certain ? "
Duke of D. : " Positive. I saw it there only the
er day, when I was hunting out some photos of
ry for Cathcart, and I remember saying then that it
getting rusty lying about. There's the speck of
t."
The Coroner : " Did you keep it loaded ? "
Duke of D. : " Lord, no ! I really don't know why
vas there. I fancy I turned it out one day with some
Army stuff, and found it among my shooting things
en I was up at Riddlesdale in August. I think the
ridges were with it."
The Coroner : " Was the drawer locked ? "
Duke of D. : " Yes ; but the key was in the lock.
wife tells me I'm careless."
The Coroner : " Did anybody else know the revolver
there ? "
Duke of D. : " Fleming did, I think. I don't know
nybody else."
Detective-Inspector Parker of Scotland Yard, having
y arrived on Friday, had been unable as yet to make
very close investigation. Certain indications led
to think that some person or persons had been
the scene of the tragedy in addition to those who
taken part in the discovery. He preferred to say
hing more at present.
The Coroner then reconstructed the evidence in
onological order. At, or a little after, ten o'clock
re had been a quarrel between deceased and the
ke of Denver, after which deceased had left the house
er to be seen alive again. They had the evidence of
. Pettigrew-Robinson that the Duke had gone down-
rs at 11.30, and that of Colonel Marchbanks that he
been heard immediately afterwards moving about
he study, the room in which the revolver produced in
lence was usually kept. Against this they had the

Duke's own sworn statement that he had not left h bedroom till half-past two in the morning. The ju would have to consider what weight was to be attach to those conflicting statements. Then, as to the sh heard in the night ; the gamekeeper had said he hear shot at ten minutes to twelve, but he had supposed it be fired by poachers. It was, in fact, quite possil that there had been poachers about. On the other han Lady Mary's statement that she had heard the shot about three a.m. did not fit in very well with the docto evidence that when he arrived at Riddlesdale at 4. deceased had been already three or four hours dea They would remember also that, in Dr. Thorp opinion, death had not immediately followed the wou If they believed this evidence, therefore, they would ha to put back the moment of death to between eleven p. and midnight, and this might very well have been shot which the gamekeeper heard. In that case they h still to ask themselves about the shot which had awaker Lady Mary Wimsey. Of course, if they liked to put t down to poachers, there was no inherent impossibili

They next came to the body of deceased, which h been discovered by the Duke of Denver at three a lying outside the door of the small conservatory, n the covered well. There seemed little doubt, from medical evidence, that the shot which killed decea had been fired in the shrubbery, about seven minut distance from the house, and that the body of decea had been dragged from that place to the house. I ceased had undoubtedly died as the result of being s in the lungs. The jury would have to decide whet that shot was fired by his own hand or by the hand another ; and, if the latter, whether by accident, in s defence, or by malice aforethought with intent to m der. As regards suicide, they must consider what t knew of deceased's character and circumstances. I ceased was a young man in the prime of his strength, apparently of considerable fortune. He had hac

ritorious military career, and was liked by his friends. e Duke of Denver had thought sufficiently well of n to consent to his own sister's engagement to de- sed. There was evidence to show that the fiancés, ugh perhaps not demonstrative, were on excellent ns. The Duke affirmed that on the Wednesday ht deceased had announced his intention of breaking the engagement. Did they believe that deceased, hout even communicating with the lady, or writing ord of explanation or farewell, would thereupon rush and shoot himself? Again, the jury must consider accusation which the Duke of Denver said he had ught against deceased. He had accused him of ating at cards. In the kind of society to which the sons involved in this inquiry belonged, such a mis- neanour as cheating at cards was regarded as far more meful than such sins as murder and adultery. Pos- ly the mere suggestion of such a thing, whether well- nded or not, might well cause a gentleman of sen- ve honour to make away with himself. But was de- sed honourable? Deceased had been educated in nce, and French notions of the honest thing were y different from British ones. The Coroner himself l had business relations with French persons in his acity as a solicitor, and could assure such of the jury had never been in France that they ought to allow for se different standards. Unhappily, the alleged letter ing details of the accusation had not been produced them. Next, they might ask themselves whether it s not more usual for a suicide to shoot himself in the d. They should ask themselves how deceased came the revolver. And, finally, they must consider, in t case, who had dragged the body towards the house, l why the person had chosen to do so, with great our to himself and at the risk of extinguishing any gering remnant of the vital spark,* instead of arousing household and fetching help.

* Verbatim.

If they excluded suicide, there remained accider manslaughter, or murder. As to the first, if they thoug it likely that deceased or any other person had taken o the Duke of Denver's revolver that night for any pu pose, and that, in looking at, cleaning, shooting with, otherwise handling the weapon, it had gone off a killed deceased accidentally, then they would return verdict of death by misadventure accordingly. In th case, how did they explain the conduct of the perso whoever it was, who had dragged the body to the doo

The Coroner then passed on to speak of the law co cerning manslaughter. He reminded them that mere words, however insulting or threatening, can be efficient excuse for killing anybody, and that the confl must be sudden and unpremeditated. Did they thir for example, that the Duke had gone out, wishing induce his guest to return and sleep in the house, a that deceased had retorted upon him with blows menaces of assault? If so, and the Duke, having weapon in his hand, had shot deceased in self-defen that was only manslaughter. But, in that case, they mu ask themselves how the Duke came to go out to deceas with a lethal weapon in his hand? And this suggesti was in direct conflict with the Duke's own evidence.

Lastly, they must consider whether there was suf cient evidence of malice to justify a verdict of murd They must consider whether any person had a motiv means, and opportunity for killing deceased; a whether they could reasonably account for that perso conduct on any other hypothesis. And, if they thoug there *was* such a person, and that his conduct was in a way suspicious or secretive, or that he had wilfu suppressed evidence which might have had a beari on the case, or (here the Coroner spoke with gr emphasis, staring over the Duke's head) fabricated oth evidence with intent to mislead—then all these circu stances might be sufficient to amount to a violent p sumption of guilt against some party, in which case th

re in duty bound to bring in a verdict of wilful mur- against that party. And, in considering this aspect he question, the Coroner added, they would have to ide in their own minds whether the person who had gged deceased towards the conservatory door had ie so with the object of obtaining assistance or of usting the body down the garden well, which, as they l heard from Inspector Craikes, was situate close by spot where the body had been found. If the jury e satisfied that deceased had been murdered, but were prepared to accuse any particular person on the evi- ice, they might bring in a verdict of murder against an known person, or persons ; but, if they felt justified aying the killing at any person's door, then they must w no respect of persons to prevent them from doing ir duty.

Guided by these extremely plain hints, the jury, with- very long consultation, returned a verdict of wilful rder against Gerald, Duke of Denver.

CHAPTER II

THE GREEN-EYED CAT

And here's to the hound
With his nose unto the ground——
—Drink, Puppy, Drin

SOME people hold that breakfast is the best meal the day. Others, less robust, hold that it is the wor and that, of all breakfasts in the week, Sunday morni breakfast is incomparably the worst.

The party gathered about the breakfast-table Riddlesdale Lodge held, if one might judge from th faces, no brief for that day miscalled of sweet refecti and holy love. The only member of it who seem neither angry nor embarrassed was the Hon. Fred Arbuthnot, and he was silent, engaged in trying to ta the whole skeleton out of a bloater at once. The ve presence of that undistinguished fish upon the Duches breakfast-table indicated a disorganised household.

The Duchess of Denver was pouring out coffee. T was one of her uncomfortable habits. Persons arrivi late for breakfast were thereby made painfully aware their sloth. She was a long-necked, long-backed wom who disciplined her hair and her children. She v never embarrassed, and her anger, though never p mitted to be visible, made itself felt the more.

Colonel and Mrs. Marchbanks sat side by side. Th had nothing beautiful about them but a stolid mut affection. Mrs. Marchbanks was not angry, but was embarrassed in the presence of the Duchess, beca she could not feel sorry for her. When you felt so

people you called them " poor old dear " or " poor
r old man." Since, obviously, you could not call the
chess poor old dear, you were not being properly
ry for her. This distressed Mrs. Marchbanks. The
onel was both embarrassed and angry—embarrassed
ause, 'pon my soul, it was very difficult to know what
talk about in a house where your host had been
sted for murder ; angry in a dim way, like an injured
mal, because unpleasant things like this had no
iness to break in on the shooting-season.

Mrs. Pettigrew-Robinson was not only angry, she was
raged. As a girl she had adopted the motto stamped
n the school notepaper : *Quæcunque honesta.* She
always thought it *wrong* to let your mind *dwell* on
thing that was not really nice. In middle life she
made a point of ignoring those newspaper paragraphs
ch bore such headlines as : "ASSAULT UPON A SCHOOL-
CHER AT CRICKLEWOOD " ; " DEATH IN A PINT OF
UT " ; " £75 FOR A KISS " ; or " SHE CALLED HIM
BBYKINS." She said she could not see what *good* it
you to know about such things. She regretted hav-
consented to visit Riddlesdale Lodge in the absence
he Duchess. She had never liked Lady Mary ; she
sidered her a very objectionable specimen of the
dern independent young woman ; besides, there had
n that very undignified incident connected with a
shevist while Lady Mary was nursing in London
ing the war. Nor had Mrs. Pettigrew-Robinson at
cared for Captain Denis Cathcart. She did not like
ung man to be handsome in that obvious kind of way.
, of course, since Mr. Pettigrew-Robinson had
ted to come to Riddlesdale, it was her place to be with
n. She was not to blame for the unfortunate result.

Mr. Pettigrew-Robinson was angry, quite simply, be-
se the detective from Scotland Yard had not accepted
help in searching the house and grounds for foot-
nts. As an older man of some experience in these
ters (Mr. Pettigrew-Robinson was a county magis-

trate) he had gone out of his way to place himself at t man's disposal. Not only had the man been short wi him, but he had rudely ordered him out of the conse vatory, where he (Mr. Pettigrew-Robinson) had be reconstructing the affair from the point of view of La Mary.

All these angers and embarrassments might ha caused less pain to the company had they not be aggravated by the presence of the detective himself, quiet young man in a tweed suit, eating curry at one e of the table next to Mr. Murbles, the solicitor. Th person had arrived from London on Friday, had co rected the local police, and strongly dissented from t opinion of Inspector Craikes. He had suppressed the inquest information which, if openly given, mig have precluded the arrest of the Duke. He had of ciously detained the whole unhappy party, on t grounds that he wanted to re-examine everybody, a was thus keeping them miserably cooped up togeth over a horrible Sunday ; and he had put the copin stone on his offences by turning out to be an intim friend of Lord Peter Wimsey's, and having, in con quence, to be accommodated with a bed in the gam keeper's cottage and breakfast at the Lodge.

Mr. Murbles, who was elderly and had a delic digestion, had travelled up in a hurry on Thurso night. He had found the inquest very improperly co ducted and his client altogether impracticable. He h spent all his time trying to get hold of Sir Impey Big K.C., who had vanished for the week-end, leaving address. He was eating a little dry toast, and was clined to like the detective, who called him " Sir," a passed him the butter.

" Is anybody thinking of going to church ? " ask the Duchess.

" Theodore and I should like to go," said Mrs. Pe grew-Robinson, " if it is not too much trouble ; or could walk. It is not so *very* far."

' It's two and a half miles, good," said Colonel Marchıks.

Mr. Pettigrew-Robinson looked at him gratefully.

' Of course you will come in the car," said the chess. " I am going myself."

' Are you, though ? " said the Hon. Freddy. " I , won't you get a bit stared at, what ? "

' Really, Freddy," said the Duchess, " does that tter ? "

' Well," said the Hon. Freddy, " I mean to say, these ınders about here are all Socialists and Methots. . . ."

' If they are Methodists," said Mrs. Pettigrew-Robin, " they will not be at church."

' Won't they ? " retorted the Hon. Freddy. " You they will if there's anything to see. Why, it'll be ter'n a funeral to 'em."

' Surely," said Mrs. Pettigrew-Robinson, " one has *uty* in the matter, whatever our private feelings may —especially at the present day, when people are so ribly *slack*."

She glanced at the Hon. Freddy.

' Oh, don't you mind me, Mrs. P.," said that youth iably. " All *I* say is, if these blighters make things pleasant, don't blame me."

' Whoever thought of blaming you, Freddy ? " said Duchess.

' Manner of speaking," said the Hon. Freddy.

' What do you think, Mr. Murbles ? " inquired her yship.

' I feel," said the lawyer, carefully stirring his coffee, nat, while your intention is a very admirable one, and es you very great credit, my dear lady, yet Mr. Arhnot is right in saying it may involve you in some— —unpleasant publicity. Er—I have always been a cere Christian myself, but I cannot feel that our gion demands that we should make ourselves conscuous—er—in such very painful circumstances."

Mr. Parker reminded himself of a dictum of Lor Melbourne.

" Well, after all," said Mrs. Marchbanks, " as Hele so rightly says, does it matter ? Nobody's really gc anything to be ashamed of. There has been a stupi mistake, of course, but I don't see why anybody wh wants to shouldn't go to church."

" Certainly not, certainly not, my dear," said th Colonel heartily. " We might look in ourselves, el dear ? Take a walk that way I mean, and come ou before the sermon. I think it's a good thing. Show *we* don't believe old Denver's done anything wron anyhow."

" You forget, dear," said his wife, " I've promised t stay at home with Mary, poor girl."

" Of course, of course—stupid of me," said th Colonel. " How is she ? "

" She was very restless last night, poor child," sa the Duchess. " Perhaps she will get a little sleep th morning. It has been a shock to her."

" One which may prove a blessing in disguise," sa Mrs. Pettigrew-Robinson.

" My dear ! " said her husband.

" Wonder when we shall hear from Sir Impey," sa Colonel Marchbanks hurriedly.

" Yes, indeed," moaned Mr. Murbles. " I am coun ing on his influence with the Duke."

" Of course," said Mrs. Pettigrew-Robinson, " must speak out—for everybody's sake. He must s what he was doing out of doors at that time. Or, if does not, it must be discovered. Dear me ! That's wh these detectives are for, aren't they ? "

" That is their ungrateful task," said Mr. Parker su denly. He had said nothing for a long time, and eve body jumped.

" There," said Mrs. Marchbanks, " I expect you clear it all up in no time, Mr. Parker. Perhaps you got the real mur—the culprit up your sleeve all the time

' Not quite," said Mr. Parker, " but I'll do my best to him. Besides," he added, with a grin, " I'll probably e some help on the job."

' From whom ? " inquired Mr. Pettigrew-Robinson.

' Her grace's brother-in-law."

' Peter ? " said the Duchess. " Mr. Parker must be used at the family amateur," she added.

' Not at all," said Parker. " Wimsey would be one the finest detectives in England if he wasn't lazy. ly we can't get hold of him."

' I've wired to Ajaccio—poste restante," said Mr. ırbles, " but I don't know when he's likely to call re. He said nothing about when he was coming back England."

' He's a rummy old bird," said the Hon. Freddy tact- ıly, " but he oughter be here, what ? What I mean say is, if anything happens to old Denver, don't you , he's the head of the family, ain't he—till little kled Gherkins comes of age."

n the frightful silence which followed this remark, the ınd of a walking-stick being clattered into an um- lla-stand was distinctly audible.

' Who's that, I wonder," said the Duchess.

The door waltzed open.

' Mornin', dear old things," said the newcomer cheer- ly. " How are you all ? Hullo, Helen ! Colonel, ı owe me half a crown since last September year. rnin', Mrs. Marchbanks, Mornin', Mrs. P. Well, . Murbles, how d'you like this bili-beastly weather ? n't trouble to get up, Freddy ; I'd simply hate to in- ıvenience you. Parker, old man, what a damned re- ble old bird you are ! Always on the spot, like that ent ointment thing. I say, have you all finished ? neant to get up earlier, but I was snorin' so Bunter ir : the heart to wake me. I nearly blew in last night, y e didn't arrive till 2 a.m. and I thought you ulc .'t half bless me if I did. Eh, what, Colonel ? roplane *Victoria* from Paris to London—North-

Eastern to Northallerton—damn bad roads the rest
the way, and a puncture just below Riddlesdale. Dam
bad bed at the ' Lord in Glory ' ; thought I'd blow
for the last sausage here, if I was lucky. What ? Sunda
morning in an English family and no sausages ? Go
bless my soul, what's the world coming to, eh, Colonel
I say, Helen, old Gerald's been an' gone an' done it th
time, what ? You've no business to leave him on h
own, you know ; he always gets into mischief. What
that ? Curry ? Thanks, old man. Here, I say, yo
needn't be so stingy about it ; I've been travelling f
three days on end. Freddy, pass the toast. Beg pardo
Mrs. Marchbanks ? Oh, rather, yes ; Corsica was pe
fectly amazin'—all black-eyed fellows with knives in the
belts and jolly fine-looking girls. Old Bunter had
regular affair with the inn-keeper's daughter in o
place. D'you know, he's an awfully susceptible c
beggar. You'd never think it, would you ? Jove ! I a
hungry. I say, Helen, I meant to get you some fetchi
crêpe-de-Chine undies from Paris, but I saw that c
Parker was gettin' ahead of me over the bloodstains,
we packed up our things and buzzed off."

Mrs. Pettigrew-Robinson rose.

" Theodore," she said, "I think we ought to be getti
ready for church."

" I will order the car," said the Duchess. " Peter,
course I'm exceedingly glad to see you. Your leavi
no address was most inconvenient. Ring for anythi
you want. It is a pity you didn't arrive in time to s
Gerald."

" Oh, that's all right," said Lord Peter cheerfull
" I'll look him up in quod. Y'know, it's rather a go
idea to keep one's crimes in the family ; one has
many more facilities. I'm sorry for poor old Pol
though. How is she ? "

" She must not be disturbed to-day," said the Duch
with decision.

" Not a bit of it," said Lord Peter ; " she'll keep. T

Parker and I hold high revel. To-day he shows me the bloody footprints—it's all right, Helen, that's not earin', that's an adjective of quality. I hope they n't all washed away, are they, old thing ? "

" No," said Parker, " I've got most of them under ver-pots."

" Then pass the bread and squish," said Lord Peter, nd tell me all about it."

The departure of the church-going element had in-ed a more humanitarian atmosphere. Mrs. March-ks stumped off upstairs to tell Mary that Peter had ne, and the Colonel lit a large cigar. The Hon. ddy rose, stretched himself, pulled a leather armchair the fireside, and sat down with his feet on the brass der, while Parker marched round and poured himself another cup of coffee.

" I suppose you've seen the papers," he said.

" Oh, yes, I read up the inquest," said Lord Peter. 'know, if you'll excuse my saying so, I think you ner mucked it between you."

" It was disgraceful," said Mr. Murbles, " disgraceful. e Coroner behaved most improperly. He had no siness to give such a summing-up. With a jury of norant country fellows, what could one expect ? And details that were allowed to come out ! If I could e got here earlier——"

" I'm afraid that was partly my fault, Wimsey," said ker penitently. " Craikes rather resents me. The perintendent at Stapley sent to us over his head, and en the message came through I ran along to the Chief I asked for the job, because I thought if there should any misconception or difficulty, you see, you'd just soon I tackled it as anybody else. I had a few little angements to make about a forgery I've been looking o, and, what with one thing and another, I didn't get till the night express. By the time I turned up on day, Craikes and the Coroner were already as thick as eves, had fixed the inquest for that morning—which

was ridiculous—and arranged to produce their blesse evidence as dramatically as possible. I only had tim to skim over the ground (disfigured, I'm sorry to sa by the prints of Craikes and his local ruffians), and reall had nothing for the jury."

" Cheer up," said Wimsey. " I'm not blaming yo Besides, it all lends excitement to the chase."

" Fact is," said the Hon Freddy, " that we ain't popu lar with respectable Coroners. Giddy aristocrats an immoral Frenchmen. I say, Peter, sorry you've misse Miss Lydia Cathcart. You'd have loved her. She gone back to Golders Green and taken the body wit her."

" Oh, well," said Wimsey. " I don't suppose the was anything abstruse about the body."

" No," said Parker, " the medical evidence was a right as far as it went. He was shot through the lung and that's all."

" Though, mind you," said the Hon. Freddy, " I didn't shoot himself. I didn't say anything, not wishi to upset old Denver's story, but, you know, all that stu about his bein' so upset and go-to-blazes in his mann was all my whiskers."

" How do you know ? " said Peter.

" Why, my dear man, Cathcart'n I toddled up to b together. I was rather fed up, havin' dropped a lot some shares, besides missin' everything I shot at in t mornin', an' lost a bet I made with the Colonel about t number of toes on the kitchen cat, an' I said to Cathca it was a hell of a damn-fool world, or words to that effe ' Not a bit of it,' he said ; ' it's a damn good world. I goin' to ask Mary for a date to-morrow, an' then we'll and live in Paris, where they understand sex.' I sa somethin' or other vague, and he went off whistlin'."

Parker looked grave. Colonel Marchbanks clear his throat.

" Well, well," he said, " there's no accounting fo man like Cathcart, no accounting at all. Brought

France, you know. Not at all like a straightforward glishman. Always up and down, up and down ! Very , poor fellow. Well, well, Peter, hope you and Mr. ker will find out something about it. We mustn't e poor old Denver cooped up in gaol like this, you w. Awfully unpleasant for him, poor chap, and with birds so good this year. Well, I expect you'll be king a tour of inspection, eh, Mr. Parker ? What do say to shoving the balls about a bit, Freddy ? "

" Right you are," said the Hon. Freddy ; " you'll have give me a hundred, though, Colonel."

" Nonsense, nonsense," said that veteran, in high good nour ; " you play an excellent game."

Mr. Murbles having withdrawn, Wimsey and Parker ed each other over the remains of the breakfast.

" Peter," said the detective, " I don't know if I've ne the right thing by coming. If you feel——"

" Look here, old man," said his friend earnestly, "let's out the considerations of delicacy. We're goin' to rk this case like any other. If anything unpleasant ns up, I'd rather you saw it than anybody else. It's uncommonly pretty little case, on its merits, and I'm n' to put some damn good work into it."

" If you're sure it's all right——"

" My dear man, if you hadn't been here I'd have t for you. Now let's get to business. Of course, settin' off with the assumption that old Gerald didn't it."

" I'm sure he didn't," agreed Parker.

" No, no," said Wimsey, " that isn't your line. thing rash about you—nothing trustful. You are ected to throw cold water on my hopes and doubt my conclusions."

" Right ho ! " said Parker. " Where would you like begin ? "

Peter considered. " I think we'll start from Cath-t's bedroom," he said.

. . . . . .

The bedroom was of moderate size, with a single wi dow overlooking the front door. The bed was on t right-hand side, the dressing-table before the windo On the left was the fireplace, with an arm-chair before and a small writing-table.

" Everything's as it was," said Parker. " Craikes h that much sense."

" Yes," said Lord Peter. " Very well. Gerald sa that when he charged Cathcart with bein' a scamp, Cat cart jumped up, nearly knockin' the table over. Tha the writin'-table, then, so Cathcart was sittin' in t armchair. Yes, he was—and he pushed it back violent and rumpled up the carpet. See ! So far, so good. N what was he doin' there ? He wasn't readin', becau there's no book about, and we know that he rush straight out of the room and never came back. Ve good. Was he writin' ? No ; virgin sheet of blottir paper——"

" He might have been writing in pencil," suggest Parker.

" That's true, old Kill-Joy, so he might. Well, if was he shoved the paper into his pocket when Gera came in, because it isn't here ; but he didn't, because wasn't found on his body ; so he wasn't writing."

" Unless he threw the paper away somewhere else said Parker. " I haven't been all over the grounds, y know, and at the smallest computation—if we acce the shot heard by Hardraw at 11.50 as *the* shot—ther an hour and a half unaccounted for."

" Very well. Let's say there is nothing to show was writing. Will that do ? Well, then——"

Lord Peter drew out a lens and scrutinised the surfa of the armchair carefully before sitting down in it.

" Nothing helpful there," he said. " To proce Cathcart sat where I am sitting. He wasn't writin he—you're sure this room hasn't been touched ? "

" Certain."

" Then he wasn't smoking."

"Why not? He might have chucked the stub of a gar or cigarette into the fire when Denver came in."

"Not a cigarette," said Peter, "or we should find races somewhere—on the floor or in the grate. That ght ash blows about so. But a cigar—well, he might ave smoked a cigar without leaving a sign, I suppose. ut I hope he didn't."

"Why?"

"Because, old son, I'd rather Gerald's account had me element of truth in it. A nervy man doesn't sit own to the delicate enjoyment of a cigar before bed, nd cherish the ash with such scrupulous care. On the ther hand, if Freddy's right, and Cathcart was feelin' nusually sleek and pleased with life, that's just the sort f thing he would do."

"Do you think Mr. Arbuthnot would have invented ll that, as a matter of fact?" said Parker thoughtfully. He doesn't strike me that way. He'd have to be naginative and spiteful to make it up, and I really don't ink he's either."

"I know," said Lord Peter. "I've known old Freddy ll my life, and he wouldn't hurt a fly. Besides, he imply hasn't the wits to make up any sort of a story. ut what bothers me is that Gerald most certainly hasn't e wits either to invent that Adelphi drama between im and Cathcart."

"On the other hand," said Parker, "if we allow for moment that he shot Cathcart, he had an incentive invent it. He would be trying to get his head out of e—I mean, when anything important is at stake it's onderful how it sharpens one's wits. And the story eing so far-fetched does rather suggest an unpractised tory-teller."

"True, O King. Well, you've sat on all my dis-overies so far. Never mind. My head is bloody but nbowed. Cathcart was sitting here——"

"So your brother said."

"Curse you, *I* say he was; at least, somebody was;

he's left the impression of his sit-me-down-upon on the cushion."

"That might have been earlier in the day."

"Rot. They were out all day. You needn't overdo this Sadducee attitude, Charles. I say Cathcart was sitting here, and—hullo! hullo!"

He leaned forward and stared into the grate.

"There's some burnt paper here, Charles."

"I know. I was frightfully excited about that yesterday, but I found it was just the same in several of the rooms. They often let the bedroom fires go out when everybody's out during the day, and relight them about an hour before dinner. There's only the cook, housemaid, and Fleming here, you see, and they've got a lot to do with such a large party."

Lord Peter was picking the charred fragments over.

"I can find nothing to contradict your suggestion," he sadly said, "and this fragment of the *Morning Post* rather confirms it. Then we can only suppose that Cathcart sat here in a brown study, doing nothing at all. That doesn't get us much further, I'm afraid." He got up and went to the dressing-table.

"I like these tortoiseshell sets," he said, "and the perfume is '*Baiser du Soir*'—very nice too. New to me. I must draw Bunter's attention to it. A charming manicure set, isn't it? You know, I like being clean and neat and all that, but Cathcart was the kind of man who always impressed you as bein' just a little *too* well turned out. Poor devil! And he'll be buried at Golders Green after all. I only saw him once or twice, you know. He impressed me as knowin' about everything there was to know. I was rather surprised at Mary takin' to him, but, then, I know really awfully little about Mary. You see, she's five years younger than me. When the war broke out she'd just left school and gone to a place in Paris, and I joined up, and she came back and did nursing and social work, so I only saw her occasionally. At that time she was rather taken up with new schemes for

ittin' the world to rights and hadn't a lot to say to me. nd she got hold of some pacifist fellow who was a bit a stumer, I fancy. Then I was ill, you know, and en I got the chuck from Barbara and didn't feel much ke botherin' about other people's heart-to-hearts, and en I got mixed up in the Attenbury diamond case— id the result is I know uncommonly little about my own ster. But it looks as though her taste in men had tered. I know my mother said Cathcart had charm ; at means he was attractive to women, I suppose. No an can see what makes that in another man, but mother usually right. What's become of this fellow's papers?"

"He left very little here," replied Parker. "There's cheque-book on Cox's Charing Cross branch, but it's a ew one and not very helpful. Apparently he only kept a nall current account with them for convenience when e was in England. The cheques are mostly to self, ith an occasional hotel or tailor."

"Any pass-book ? "

"I think all his important papers are in Paris. He has flat there, near the river somewhere. We're in communication with the Paris police. He had a room at the lbany. I've told them to lock it up till I get there. I ought of running up to town to-morrow."

"Yes, you'd better. Any pocket-book ? "

"Yes ; here you are. About £30 in various notes, wine-merchant's card, and a bill for a pair of riding-eeches."

"No correspondence ? "

"Not a line."

"No," said Wimsey, "he was the kind, I imagine, at didn't keep letters. Much too good an instinct of lf-preservation."

"Yes. I asked the servants about his letters, as a atter of fact. They said he got a good number, but ever left them about. They couldn't tell me much out the ones he wrote, because all the outgoing letters e dropped into the post-bag, which is carried down to

the post-office as it is and opened there, or handed over to the postman when—or if—he calls. The general impression was that he didn't write much. The housemaid said she never found anything to speak of in the waste-paper basket."

"Well, that's uncommonly helpful. Wait a moment. Here's his fountain-pen. Very handsome—Onoto with complete gold casing. Dear me! entirely empty. Well, I don't know that one can deduce anything from that, exactly. I don't see any pencil about, by the way. I'm inclined to think you're wrong in supposing that he was writing letters."

"I didn't suppose anything," said Parker mildly. "I daresay you're right."

Lord Peter left the dressing-table, looked through the contents of the wardrobe, and turned over the two or three books on the pedestal beside the bed.

"*La Rôtisserie de la Reine Pédauque*, *L'Anneau d'Améthyste*, *South Wind* (our young friend works out very true to type), *Chronique d'un Cadet de Coutras* (tut-tut, Charles!), *Manon Lescaut*. H'm! Is there anything else in this room I ought to look at?"

"I don't think so. Where'd you like to go now?"

"We'll follow 'em down. Wait a jiff. Who are in the other rooms? Oh, yes. Here's Gerald's room. Helen's at church. In we go. Of course, this has been dusted and cleaned up, and generally ruined for purposes of observation?"

"I'm afraid so. I could hardly keep the Duchess out of her bedroom."

"No. Here's the window Gerald shouted out of. H'm! Nothing in the grate here, naturally—the fire's been lit since. I say, I wonder where Gerald did put that letter to—Freeborn's, I mean."

"Nobody's been able to get a word out of him about it," said Parker. "Old Mr. Murbles had a fearful time with him. The Duke insists simply that he destroyed it. Mr. Murbles says that's absurd. So it is. If he was

ing to bring that sort of accusation against his sister's ancé he'd want *some* evidence of a method in his mad-ess, wouldn't he? Or was he one of those Roman others who say simply: 'As the head of the family I rbid the banns and that's enough'?"

"Gerald," said Wimsey, "is a good, clean, decent, oroughbred public schoolboy, and a shocking ass. ut I don't think he's so mediaeval as that."

"But if he has the letter, why not produce it?"

"Why, indeed? Letters from old college friends in gypt aren't, as a rule, compromising."

"You don't suppose," suggested Parker tentatively, that this Mr. Freeborn referred in his letter to any d—er—entanglement which your brother wouldn't ish the Duchess to know about?"

Lord Peter paused, while absently examining a row of ots.

"That's an idea," he said. "There were occasions mild ones, but Helen would make the most of them." e whistled thoughtfully. "Still, when it comes to the llows——"

"Do you suppose, Wimsey, that your brother really ntemplates the gallows?" asked Parker.

"I think Murbles put it to him pretty straight," said rd Peter.

"Quite so. But does he actually realise—imagin-vely—that it is possible to hang an English peer for rder on circumstantial evidence?"

Lord Peter considered this.

"Imagination isn't Gerald's strong point," he ad-itted. "I suppose they *do* hang peers? They can't beheaded on Tower Hill or anything?"

"I'll look it up," said Parker; "but they certainly nged Earl Ferrers in 1760."

"Did they, though?" said Lord Peter. "Ah, well, the old pagan said of the Gospels, after all, it was a long ne ago, and we'll hope it wasn't true."

"It's true enough," said Parker; "and he was dis-

sected and anatomised afterwards. But that part of the treatment is obsolete."

"We'll tell Gerald about it," said Lord Peter, "and persuade him to take the matter seriously. Which are the boots he wore Wednesday night?"

"These," said Parker, "but the fool's cleaned them."

"Yes," said Lord Peter bitterly. "M'm! a good heavy lace-up boot—the sort that sends the blood to the head."

"He wore leggings, too," said Parker; "these."

"Rather elaborate preparations for a stroll in the garden. But, as you were just going to say, the night was wet. I must ask Helen if Gerald ever suffered from insomnia."

"I did. She said she thought not as a rule, but that he occasionally had toothache, which made him restless."

"It wouldn't send one out of doors on a cold night though. Well, let's get downstairs."

They passed through the billiard-room, where the Colonel was making a sensational break, and into the small conservatory which led from it.

Lord Peter looked gloomily round at the chrysanthemums and boxes of bulbs.

"These damned flowers look jolly healthy," he said. "Do you mean you've been letting the gardener swarm in here every day to water 'em?"

"Yes," said Parker apologetically, "I did. But he's had strict orders only to walk on these mats."

"Good," said Lord Peter. "Take 'em up, then, and let's get to work."

With his lens to his eye he crawled cautiously over the floor.

"They all came through this way, I suppose," he said.

"Yes," said Parker. "I've identified most of the marks. People went in and out. Here's the Duke. He comes in from outside. He trips over the body." (Parker had opened the outer door and lifted some matting, to show a trampled patch of gravel, discoloured with

ood.) " He kneels by the body. Here are his knees
id toes. Afterwards he goes into the house, through
e conservatory, leaving a good impression in black
ud and gravel just inside the door."

Lord Peter squatted carefully over the marks.

" It's lucky the gravel's so soft here," he said.

" Yes. It's just a patch. The gardener tells me it gets
ry trampled and messy just here owing to his coming
fill cans from the water-trough. They fill the trough
o from the well every so often, and then carry the
ater away in cans. It got extra bad this year, and they
ut down fresh gravel a few weeks ago."

" Pity they didn't extend their labours all down the
th while they were about it," grunted Lord Peter, who
as balancing himself precariously on a small piece of
cking. " Well, that bears out old Gerald so far. Here's
elephant been over this bit of box border. Who's
at ? "

" Oh, that's a constable. I put him at eighteen stone.
e's nothing. And this rubber sole with a patch on it is
raikes. He's all over the place. This squelchy-looking
ing is Mr. Arbuthnot in bedroom slippers, and the
loshes are Mr. Pettigrew-Robinson. We can dismiss
l those. But now here, just coming over the threshold,
a woman's foot in a strong shoe. I make that out to be
ady Mary's. Here it is again, just at the edge of the
ell. She came out to examine the body."

" Quite so," said Peter ; " and then she came in again,
ith a few grains of red gravel on her shoes. Well, that's
l right. Hullo ! "

On the outer side of the conservatory were some
elves for small plants, and, beneath these, a damp and
smal bed of earth, occupied, in a sprawling and lacka-
isical fashion, by stringy cactus plants and a sporadic
owth of maidenhair fern, and masked by a row of
rge chrysanthemums in pots.

" What've you got ? " inquired Parker, seeing his
iend peering into this green retreat.

Lord Peter withdrew his long nose from between two pots and said : " Who put what down here ? "

Parker hastened to the place. There, among the cacti, was certainly the clear mark of some oblong object, with corners, that had been stood out of sight on the earth behind the pots.

" It's a good thing Gerald's gardener ain't one of those conscientious blighters that can't even let a cactus alone for the winter," said Lord Peter, " or he'd've tenderly lifted these little drooping heads—oh ! damn and blast the beastly plant for a crimson porcupine ! *You* measure it."

Parker measured it.

" Two and a half feet by six inches," he said. " And fairly heavy, for it's sunk in and broken the plants about. Was it a bar of anything ? "

" I fancy not," said Lord Peter. " The impression is deeper on the farther side. I think it was something bulky set up on edge, and leaned against the glass. If you asked for my private opinion I should guess that it was a suit-case."

" A suit-case ! " exclaimed Parker. " Why a suit-case ? "

" Why indeed ? I think we may assume that it didn't stay here very long. It would have been exceedingly visible in the daytime. But somebody might very well have shoved it in here if they were caught with it—say at three o'clock in the morning—and didn't want it to be seen."

" Then when did they take it away ? "

" Almost immediately, I should say. Before daylight anyhow, or even Inspector Craikes could hardly have failed to see it."

" It's not the doctor's bag, I suppose ? "

" No—unless the doctor's a fool. Why put a bag in conveniently in a damp and dirty place out of the way when every law of sense and convenience would urge him to pop it down handy by the body ? No. Unless

raikes or the gardener has been leaving things about, was thrust away there on Wednesday night by Gerald, y Cathcart—or, I suppose, by Mary. Nobody else ould be supposed to have anything to hide."

" Yes," said Parker, " one person."

" Who's that ? "

" The Person Unknown."

" Who's he ? "

For answer Mr. Parker proudly stepped to a row of ooden frames, carefully covered with matting. Stripng this away, with the air of a bishop unveiling a emorial, he disclosed a V-shaped line of footprints.

" These," said Parker, " belong to nobody—to nobody ve ever seen or heard of, I mean."

" Hurray ! " said Peter.

> " Then downwards from the steep hill's edge
> They tracked the footmarks small

nly they're largish)."

" No such luck," said Parker. " It's more a case of :

> They followed from the earthy bank
> Those footsteps one by one,
> Into the middle of the plank ;
> And farther there were none ! "

" Great poet, Wordsworth," said Lord Peter ; " how ten I've had that feeling. Now let's see. These otmarks—a man's No. 10 with worn-down heels and patch on the left inner side—advance from the hard bit the path which shows no footmarks ; they come to the ody—here, where that pool of blood is. I say, that's ther odd, don't you think ? No ? Perhaps not. There e no footmarks under the body ? Can't say, it's such a ess. Well, the Unknown gets so far—here's a footmark eply pressed in. Was he just going to throw Cathcart to the well ? He hears a sound ; he starts ; he turns ; runs on tiptoe—into the shrubbery, by Jove ! "

"Yes," said Parker, "and the tracks come out on one of the grass paths in the wood, and there's an end of them."

"H'm! Well, we'll follow them later. Now where did they come from?"

Together the two friends followed the path away from the house. The gravel, except for the little patch before the conservatory, was old and hard, and afforded but little trace, particularly as the last few days had been rainy. Parker, however, was able to assure Wimsey that there had been definite traces of dragging and blood-stains.

"What sort of bloodstains? Smears?"

"Yes, smears mostly. There were pebbles displaced, too, all the way—and now here is something odd."

It was the clear impression of the palm of a man's hand heavily pressed into the earth of a herbaceous border, the fingers pointing towards the house. On the path the gravel had been scraped up in two long furrows. There was blood on the grass border between the path and the bed, and the edge of the grass was broken and trampled.

"I don't like that," said Lord Peter.

"Ugly, isn't it?" agreed Parker.

"Poor devil!" said Peter. "He made a determined effort to hang on here. That explains the blood by the conservatory door. But what kind of a devil drags a corpse that isn't quite dead?"

A few yards farther the path ran into the main drive. This was bordered with trees, widening into a thicket. At the point of intersection of the two paths were some further indistinct marks, and in another twenty yards or so they turned aside into the thicket. A large tree had fallen at some time and made a little clearing, in the midst of which a tarpaulin had been carefully spread out and pegged down. The air was heavy with the smell of fungus and fallen leaves.

" Scene of the tragedy," said Parker briefly, rolling ack the tarpaulin.

Lord Peter gazed down sadly. Muffled in an over- oat and a thick grey scarf, he looked, with his long, arrow face, like a melancholy adjutant stork. The rithing body of the fallen man had scraped up the dead aves and left a depression in the sodden ground. At ne place the darker earth showed where a great pool of lood had soaked into it, and the yellow leaves of a panish poplar were rusted with no autumnal stain.

" That's where they found the handkerchief and volver," said Parker. " I looked for finger-marks, but ie rain and mud had messed everything up."

Wimsey took out his lens, lay down, and conducted personal tour of the whole space slowly on his stomach, arker moving mutely after him.

" He paced up and down for some time," said Lord eter. " He wasn't smoking. He was turning some- ing over in his mind, or waiting for somebody. What's is ? Aha ! Here's our No. 10 foot again, coming in rough the trees on the farther side. No signs of a ruggle. That's odd ! Cathcart was shot close up, asn't he ? "

" Yes ; it singed his shirt-front."

" Quite so. Why did he stand still to be shot at ? "

" I imagine," said Parker, " that if he had an appoint- ent with No. 10 Boots it was somebody he knew, who uld get close to him without arousing suspicion."

" Then the interview was a friendly one—on Cath- rt's side, anyhow. But the revolver's a difficulty. How d No. 10 get hold of Gerald's revolver ? "

" The conservatory door was open," said Parker ubiously.

" Nobody knew about that except Gerald and Flem- g," retorted Lord Peter. " Besides, do you mean to ll me that No. 10 walked in here, went to the study, tched the revolver, walked back here, and shot Cath- rt ? It seems a clumsy method. If he wanted to do

any shooting, why didn't he come armed in the first place ? "

" It seems more probable that Cathcart brought the revolver," said Parker.

" Then why no signs of a struggle ? "

" Perhaps Cathcart shot himself," said Parker.

" Then why should No. 10 drag him into a conspicuous position and then run away ? "

" Wait a minute," said Parker. " How's this ? No. 10 has an appointment with Cathcart—to blackmail him, let's say. He somehow gets word of his intention to him between 9.45 and 10.15. That would account for the alteration in Cathcart's manner, and allow both Mr Arbuthnot and the Duke to be telling the truth. Cathcart rushes violently out after his row with your brother. He comes down here to keep his appointment. He paces up and down waiting for No. 10. No. 10 arrives and parleys with Cathcart. Cathcart offers him money. No. 10 stands out for more. Cathcart says he really hasn't got it. No. 10 says in that case he blows the gaff. Cathcart retorts, ' In that case you can go to the devil. I'm going there myself.' Cathcart, who has previously got hold of the revolver, shoots himself. No. 10 is seized with remorse. He sees that Cathcart isn't quite dead. He picks him up and part drags, part carries him to the house. He is smaller than Cathcart and not very strong and finds it a hard job. They have just got to the conservatory door when Cathcart has a final hœmorrhage and gives up the ghost. No. 10 suddenly becomes aware that his position in somebody else's grounds, alone with a corpse at 3 a.m., wants some explaining. He drops Cathcart—and bolts. Enter the Duke of Denver and falls over the body. Tableau."

" That's good," said Lord Peter ; " that's very good. But when do you suppose it happened ? Gerald found the body at 3 a.m. ; the doctor was here at 4.30, and says Cathcart had been dead several hours. Very well. Now how about that shot my sister heard at three o'clock ?

" Look here, old man," said Parker, " I don't want appear rude to your sister. May I put it like this ? suggest that that shot at 3 a.m. was poachers."

" Poachers by all means," said Lord Peter. " Well, ally, Parker, I think that hangs together. Let's adopt at explanation provisionally. The first thing to do is ow to find No. 10, since he can bear witness that Cath- rt committed suicide ; and that, as far as my brother concerned, is the only thing that matters a rap. But r the satisfaction of my own curiosity I'd like to know: hat was No. 10 blackmailing Cathcart about ? Who d a suit-case in the conservatory ? And what was erald doing in the garden at 3 a.m. ? "

" Well," said Parker, " suppose we begin by tracing here No. 10 came from."

" Hi, hi ! " cried Wimsey, as they returned to the ail. " Here's something—here's real treasure-trove, rker ! "

From amid the mud and the fallen leaves he retrieved tiny, glittering object—a flash of white and green be- een his finger-tips.

It was a little charm such as women hang upon a acelet—a diminutive diamond cat with eyes of bright erald.

CHAPTER III

MUDSTAINS AND BLOODSTAINS

Other things are all very well in their way, but give me Blood . . . We say, "There it is! that's Blood!" It is an actual matter of fact. We point it out. It admits of no doubt. . . . We must have Blood, you know.—David Copperfield.

"HITHERTO," said Lord Peter, as they picked their painful way through the little wood on the trail of Gent's No. 10's, "I have always maintained that those obliging criminals who strew their tracks with little articles of personal adornment—here he is, on a squashed fungus—were an invention of detective fiction for the benefit of the author. I see that I have still something to learn about my job."

"Well, you haven't been at it very long, have you?" said Parker. "Besides, we don't know that the diamond cat is the criminal's. It may belong to a member of your own family, and have been lying here for days. It may belong to Mr. What's-his-name in the States, or to the last tenant but one, and have been lying here for years. This broken branch may be our friend—I think it is."

"I'll ask the family," said Lord Peter, "and we could find out in the village if anyone's ever inquired for a lost cat. They're pukka stones. It ain't the sort of thing one would drop without making a fuss about—I've lost him altogether."

"It's all right—I've got him. He's tripped over a root."

"Serve him glad," said Lord Peter viciously, straigh

ing his back. " I say, I don't think the human frame very thoughtfully constructed for this sleuth-hound siness. If one could go on all-fours, or had eyes in e's knees, it would be a lot more practical."

" There are many difficulties inherent in a teleological ew of creation," said Parker placidly. " Ah ! here e are at the park palings."

" And here's where he got over," said Lord Peter, inting to a place where the *chevaux de frise* on the top as broken away. " Here's the dent where his heels me down, and here's where he fell forward on hands d knees. Hum ! Give us a back, old man, would u ? Thanks. An old break, I see. Mr. Montague-w-in-the-States should keep his palings in better der. No. 10 tore his coat on the spikes all the same ; left a fragment of Burberry behind him. What luck ! ere's a deep, damp ditch on the other side, which I all now proceed to fall into."

A slithering crash proclaimed that he had carried out intention. Parker, thus callously abandoned, looked und, and, seeing that they were only a hundred yards so from the gate, ran along and was let out, decorously, Hardraw, the gamekeeper, who happened to be com- out of the lodge.

" By the way," said Parker to him, " did you ever d any signs of any poachers on Wednesday night er all ? "

" Nay," said the man, " not so much as a dead rabbit. eckon t'lady wor mistaken, an 'twore the shot I heard killed t'Captain."

' Possibly," said Parker. " Do you know how long spikes have been broken off the palings over there? "

' A moonth or two, happen. They should 'a' bin t right, but the man's sick."

' The gate's locked at night, I suppose ? "

' Aye."

' Anybody wishing to get in would have to waken ı ? "

"Aye, that he would."

"You didn't see any suspicious character loitering about outside these palings last Wednesday, I suppose?"

"Nay, sir, but my wife may ha' done. Hey, lass!"

Mrs. Hardraw, thus summoned, appeared at the door with a small boy clinging to her skirts.

"Wednesday?" said she. "Nay, I saw no loiterin' folks. I keep a look-out for tramps and such, as it be such a lonely place. Wednesday. Eh, now, John, that wad be t'day t'young mon called wi' t'motor-bike."

"Young man with a motor-bike?"

"I reckon 'twas. He said he'd had a puncture and asked for a bucket o' watter."

"Was that all the asking he did?"

"He asked what were t'name o' t'place and whose house it were."

"Did you tell him the Duke of Denver was livin here?"

"Aye, sir, and he said he supposed a many gentlemen came up for t'shooting."

"Did he say where he was going?"

"He said he'd coom oop fra' Weirdale an' were makin a trip into Coomberland."

"How long was he here?"

"Happen half an hour. An' then he tried to get his machine started, an' I see him hop-hoppitin' away towards King's Fenton."

She pointed away to the right, where Lord Peter might be seen gesticulating in the middle of the road.

"What sort of a man was he?"

Like most people, Mrs. Hardraw was poor at definition. She thought he was youngish and tallish, neither dark nor fair, in such a long coat as motor-bicyclists use with a belt round it.

"Was he a gentleman?"

Mrs. Hardraw hesitated, and Mr. Parker mentally classed the stranger as "Not quite quite."

ou didn't happen to notice the number of the
le ? "
s. Hardraw had not. " But it had a side-car," she
d.
rd Peter's gesticulations were becoming quite
nt, and Mr. Parker hastened to rejoin him.
Come on, gossiping old thing," said Lord Peter un-
nably. " This is a beautiful ditch.

> From such a ditch as this,
> When the soft wind did gently kiss the trees
> And they did make no noise, from such a ditch
> Our friend, methinks, mounted the Troyan walls,
> And wiped his soles upon the greasy mud.

at my trousers ! "
t's a bit of a climb from this side," said Parker.
t is. He stood here in the ditch, and put one foot
his place where the paling's broken away and one
on the top, and hauled himself up. No. 10 must
been a man of exceptional height, strength, and
. I couldn't get my foot up, let alone reaching the
ith my hand. I'm five foot nine. Could you ? "
ker was six foot, and could just touch the top of
all with his hand.
might do it—on one of my best days," he said, " for
equate object, or after adequate stimulant."
ust so," said Lord Peter. " Hence we deduce No.
xceptional height and strength."
es," said Parker. " It's a bit unfortunate that
d to deduce his exceptional shortness and weak-
ust now, isn't it ? "
h ! " said Peter. " Well—well, as you so rightly
hat *is* a bit unfortunate."
Vell, it may clear up presently. He didn't have a
derate to give him a back or a leg, I suppose ? "
ot unless the confederate was a being without feet
visible means of support," said Lord Peter, in-
ng the solitary print of a pair of patched 10's. " By

the way, how did he make straight in the dark for th
place where the spikes were missing ? Looks as thoug
he belonged to the neighbourhood, or had reco
noitred previously."

" Arising out of that reply," said Parker, " I will no
relate to you the entertaining ' gossip ' I have had wi
Mrs. Hardraw."

" Humph ! " said Wimsey at the end of it. " That
interesting. We'd better make inquiries at Riddlesda
and King's Fenton. Meanwhile we know where No.
came from ; now where did he go after leaving Cat
cart's body by the well ? "

" The footsteps went into the preserve," said Park
" I lost them there. There is a regular carpet of de
leaves and bracken."

" Well, but we needn't go through all that sleuth gri
again," objected his friend. " The fellow went in, a
as he presumably is not there still, he came out aga
He didn't come out through the gate or Hardraw wo
have seen him ; he didn't come out the same way
went in or he would have left some traces. Therefore
came out elsewhere. Let's walk round the wall."

" Then we'll turn to the left," said Parker, " si
that's the side of the preserve, and he apparently w
through there."

" True, O King ; and as this isn't a church, there's
harm in going round it widdershins. Talking of chu
there's Helen coming back. Get a move on, old thin

They crossed the drive, passed the cottage, and th
leaving the road, followed the paling across some c
grass fields. It was not long before they found what t
sought. From one of the iron spikes above them dan
forlornly a strip of material. With Parker's assist
Wimsey scrambled up in a state of almost lyric ex
ment.

" Here we are," he cried. " The belt of a Burbe
No sort of precaution here. Here are the toe-prin
a fellow sprinting for his life. He tore off his Burbe

ıade desperate leaps—one, two, three—at the palings. he third leap he hooked it on to the spikes. He mbled up, scoring long, scrabbling marks on the ıg. He reached the top. Oh, here's a bloodstain run this crack. He tore his hands. He dropped off. wrenched the coat away, leaving the belt dang-——"

I wish you'd drop off," grumbled Parker. " You're king my collar-bone."

ord Peter dropped off obediently, and stood there ing the belt between his fingers. His narrow grey wandered restlessly over the field. Suddenly he d Parker's arm and marched briskly in the direction ıe wall on the farther side—a low erection of un-ared stone in the fashion of the country. Here he ed along like a terrier, nose foremost, the tip of his ue caught absurdly between his teeth, then jumped , and, turning to Parker, said :

Did you ever read *The Lay of the Last Minstrel?* "

I learnt a good deal of it at school," said Parker. hy ? "

Because there was a goblin page-boy in it," said l Peter, " who was always yelling ' Found ! Found! ıd ! ' at the most unnecessary moments. I always ght him a terrible nuisance, but now I know how he See here."

ose under the wall, and sunk heavily into the narrow muddy lane which ran up here at right angles to the road, was the track of a side-car combination.

Very nice too," said Mr. Parker approvingly. " New lop tyre on the front wheel. Old tyre on the back. er on the side-car tyre. Nothing could be better. ks come in from the road and go back to the road. w shoved the machine in here in case anybody of an isitive turn of mind should pass on the road and off with it, or take its number. Then he went d on shank's mare to the gap he'd spotted in the me and got over. After the Cathcart affair he took

fright, bolted into the preserve, and took the shor way to his bus, regardless. Well, now."

He sat down on the wall, and, drawing out his n book, began to jot down a description of the man f the data already known.

" Things begin to look a bit more comfortable for Jerry," said Lord Peter. He leaned on the wall began whistling softly, but with great accuracy, elaborate passage of Bach which begins " Let Zi children."

. . . . . .

" I wonder," said the Hon. Freddy Arbuthnot, "w damn silly fool invented Sunday afternoon."

He shovelled coals on to the library fire with a vic clatter, waking Colonel Marchbanks, who said, " Yes, quite right," and fell asleep again instantly.

" Don't *you* grumble, Freddy," said Lord Peter, had been occupied for some time in opening and s ting all the drawers of the writing-table in a thorou irritating manner, and idly snapping to and fro the c of the French window. " Think how dull old Jerry feel. 'Spose I'd better write him a line."

He returned to the table and took a sheet of pa " Do people use this room much to write letters in you know ? "

" No idea," said the Hon. Freddy. " Never write myself. Where's the point of writin' when you can Encourages people to write back, that's all. I t Denver writes here when he writes anywhere, and I the Colonel wrestlin' with pen and ink a day or two didn't you, Colonel ? " (The Colonel grunted, answ to his name like a dog that wags its tail in its sl " What's the matter ? Ain't there any ink ? "

" I only wondered," replied Peter placidly. slipped a paper-knife under the top sheet of the blot pad and held it up to the light. " Quite right, old Give you full marks for observation. Here's Je

ture, and the Colonel's, and a big, sprawly hand, h I should judge to be feminine." He looked at heet again, shook his head, folded it up, and placed his pocket-book. " Doesn't seem to be anything ," he commented, " but you never know. ' Five thing of fine something '—grouse, probably ; ' oe— ı '—is found, I suppose. Well, it can't do any harm ep it." He spread out his paper and began :

' Dear Jerry,—Here I am, the family sleuth on trail, and it's damned exciting——"

he Colonel snored.

nday afternoon. Parker had gone with the car ing's Fenton, with orders to look in at Riddlesdale e way and inquire for a green-eyed cat, also for a g man with a side-car. The Duchess was lying . Mrs. Pettigrew-Robinson had taken her husband brisk walk. Upstairs, somewhere, Mrs. March- s enjoyed a perfect communion of thought with her and.

rd Peter's pen gritted gently over the paper, ed, moved on again, stopped altogether. He leaned ng chin on his hands and stared out of the window, st which there came sudden little swishes of rain, rom time to time a soft, dead leaf. The Colonel d ; the fire tinkled ; the Hon. Freddy began to and tap his fingers on the arms of his chair. The moved slothfully on to five o'clock, which brought ne and the Duchess.

How's Mary ? " asked Lord Peter, coming sud- into the firelight.

'm really worried about her," said the Duchess. is giving way to her nerves in the strangest man- It is so unlike her. She will hardly let anybody near her. I have sent for Dr. Thorpe again."

Don't you think she'd be better if she got up an' downstairs a bit ? " suggested Wimsey. " Gets

broodin' about things all by herself, I shouldn't wonde
Wants a bit of Freddy's intellectual conversation to che
her up."

"You forget; poor girl," said the Duchess, "she w
engaged to Captain Cathcart. Everybody isn't as callo
as you are."

"Any more letters, your grace?" asked the footma
appearing with the post-bag.

"Oh, are you going down now?" said Wimse
"Yes, here you are—and there's one other, if you do
mind waitin' a minute while I write it. Wish I cou
write at the rate people do on the cinema," he adde
scribbling rapidly as he spoke. "'DEAR LILIAN,—Yo
father has killed Mr. William Snooks, and unless y
send me £1,000 by bearer, I shall disclose all to yo
husband.—Sincerely, EARL OF DIGGLESBRAKE.' Tha
the style; and all done in one scrape of the pen. He
you are, Fleming."

The letter was addressed to her grace the Dowa
Duchess of Denver.

. . . . . .

From the *Morning Post* of Monday, November
19—:

"ABANDONED MOTOR-CYCLE

"A singular discovery was made yesterday by
cattle-drover. He is accustomed to water his anim
in a certain pond lying a little off the road about twe
miles south of Ripley. On this occasion he saw t
one of them appeared to be in difficulties. On go
to the rescue, he found the animal entangled i
motor-cycle, which had been driven into the pond a
abandoned. With the assistance of a couple of wo
men he extricated the machine. It is a Douglas, w
dark-grey side-car. The number-plates and licen
holder have been carefully removed. The pond i
deep one, and the outfit was entirely submerged.

ems probable, however, that it could not have been ere for more than a week, since the pond is much ed on Sundays and Mondays for the watering of ttle. The police are making search for the owner. he front tyre of the bicycle is a new Dunlop, and the de-car tyre has been repaired with a gaiter. The achine is a 1914 model, much worn."

That seems to strike a chord," said Lord Peter ingly. He consulted a time-table for the time of the train to Ripley, and ordered the car.

And send Bunter to me," he added.

hat gentleman arrived just as his master was strug- into an overcoat.

What was that thing in last Thursday's paper about mber-plate, Bunter ? " inquired his lordship.

r. Bunter produced, apparently by legerdemain, a ng from an evening paper :

" Number-plate Mystery

" The Rev. Nathaniel Foulis, of St. Simon's, North llcote, was stopped at six o'clock this morning for ding a motor-cycle without number-plates. The verend gentleman seemed thunderstruck when his tention was called to the matter. He explained that had been sent for in great haste at 4 a.m. to ad- inister the Sacrament to a dying parishioner six iles away. He hastened out on his motor-cycle, hich he confidingly left by the roadside while ecuting his sacred duties. Mr. Foulis left the house 5.30 without noticing that anything was wrong. r. Foulis is well known in North Fellcote and the rrounding country, and there seems little doubt that has been the victim of a senseless practical joke. orth Fellcote is a small village a couple of miles rth of Ripley."

I'm going to Ripley, Bunter," said Lord Peter.

"Yes, my lord. Does your lordship require me?"

"No," said Lord Peter, "but—who has been lad maiding my sister, Bunter?"

"Ellen, my lord—the housemaid."

"Then I wish you'd exercise your powers of conv sation on Ellen."

"Very good, my lord."

"Does she mend my sister's clothes, and brush skirts, and all that?"

"I believe so, my lord."

"Nothing she may think is of any importance, know, Bunter."

"I wouldn't suggest such a thing to a woman, lord. It goes to their heads, if I may say so."

"When did Mr. Parker leave for town?"

"At six o'clock this morning, my lord."

. . . . . .

Circumstances favoured Mr. Bunter's inquiries. bumped into Ellen as she was descending the back st with an armful of clothing. A pair of leather gaunt was jerked from the top of the pile, and, picking them he apologetically followed the young woman into servants' hall.

"There," said Ellen, flinging her burden on the ta "and the work I've had to get them, I'm sure. T trums, that's what I call it, pretending you've got su headache you can't let a person into the room to your things down to brush, and, as soon as they're o the way, 'opping out of bed and trapesing all over place. 'Tisn't what I call a headache, would you, n But there! I daresay you don't get them like I Regular fit to split, my head is sometimes—coul keep on my feet, not if the house was burning dow just have to lay down and keep laying—something it is. And gives a person such wrinkles in one's head."

"I'm sure I don't see any wrinkles," said Mr. Bu

perhaps I haven't looked hard enough." An inter-
followed, during which Mr. Bunter looked hard
gh and close enough to distinguish wrinkles.
," said he, " wrinkles ? I don't believe I'd see any
as to take his lordship's big microscope he keeps up
wn."

Lor' now, Mr. Bunter," said Ellen, fetching a
ge and a bottle of benzene from the cupboard,
t would his lordship be using a thing like that for,
? "

Why, in our hobby, you see, Miss Ellen, which is
nal investigation, we might want to see something
ified extra big—as it might be handwriting in a
ry case, to see if anything's been altered or rubbed
or if different kinds of ink have been used. Or we
t want to look at the roots of a lock of hair, to see if
een torn out or fallen out. Or take bloodstains, now;
want to know if it was animals' blood or human
, or maybe only a glass of port."

Now is it really true, Mr. Bunter," said Ellen, laying
ed skirt out upon the table and unstoppering the
ene, " that you and Lord Peter can find out all
? "

Of course, we aren't analytical chemists," Mr.
er replied, " but his lordship's dabbled in a lot of
s—enough to know when anything looks suspicious,
if we've any doubts we send to a very famous
ific gentleman." (He gallantly intercepted Ellen's
as it approached the skirt with a benzene-soaked
ge.) " For instance, now, here's a stain on the hem
s skirt, just at the bottom of the side-seam. Now,
osing it was a case of murder, we'll say, and the
n that had worn this skirt was suspected, I should
ine that stain." (Here Mr. Bunter whipped a lens
f his pocket.) " Then I might try it at one edge
a wet handkerchief." (He suited the action to the
.) " And I should find, you see, that it came off
Then I should turn the skirt inside-out, I should

see that the stain went right through, and I should tak my scissors " (Mr. Bunter produced a small, sharp pai " and snip off a tiny bit of the inside edge of the sean like this " (he did so) " and pop it into a little pill-bo so " (the pill-box appeared magically from an inn pocket), " and seal it up both sides with a wafer, an write on the top ' Lady Mary Wimsey's skirt,' and th date. Then I should send it straight off to the analytic gentleman in London, and he'd look through his micr scope, and tell me right off that it was rabbit's bloo maybe, and how many days it had been there, and th would be the end of that," finished Mr. Bunter triun phantly, replacing his nail-scissors and thoughtless pocketing the pill-box with its contents.

" Well, he'd be wrong, then," said Ellen, with an e gaging toss of the head, " because it's bird's blood, a not rabbit's at all, because her ladyship told me so ; a wouldn't it be quicker just to go and ask the person th get fiddling round with your silly old microscope a things ? "

" Well, I only mentioned rabbits for an exampl said Mr. Bunter. " Funny she should have got a st down there. Must have regularly knelt in it."

" Yes. Bled a lot, hasn't it, poor thing ? Somebo must 'a' been shootin' careless-like. 'Twasn't his gra nor yet the Captain, poor man. Perhaps it was l Arbuthnot. He shoots a bit wild sometimes. It' nasty mess, anyway, and it's so hard to clean off, be left so long. I'm sure I wasn't thinking about clean nothing the day the poor Captain was killed ; and t the Coroner's inquest—'orrid, it was—and his grace ing took off like that ! Well, there, it upset me. I s pose I'm a bit sensitive. Anyhow, we was all at s and sevens for a day or two, and then her ladyship s herself up in her room and won't let me go near the w robe. ' Ow ! ' she says, ' do leave that wardrobe alone. Don't you know it squeaks, and my head's so and my nerves so bad I can't stand it,' she says. ' I

going to brush your skirts, my lady,' I says. ' Both-
ny skirts,' says her ladyship, ' and do go away, Ellen.
all scream if I see you fidgeting about there. You get
ny nerves,' she says. Well, I didn't see why I should
n, not after being spoken to like that. It's very nice
e a ladyship, and all your tempers coddled and called
ous prostration. I know I was dreadfully cut up
ut poor Bert, my young man what was killed in the
—nearly cried my eyes out, I did ; but, law ! Mr.
ter, I'd be ashamed to go on so. Besides, between
and I and the gate-post, Lady Mary wasn't that fond
he Captain. Never appreciated him, that's what I
to cook at the time, and she agreed with me. He had
ay with him, the Captain had. Always quite the
leman, of course, and never said anything as wasn't
place—I don't mean that—but I mean as it was a
sure to do anythink for him. Such a handsome man
e was, too, Mr. Bunter."

Ah ! " said Mr. Bunter. " So on the whole her
ship was a bit more upset than you expected her to
"

Well, to tell you the truth, Mr. Bunter, I think it's
temper. She wanted to get married and away from
e. Drat this stain ! It's regular dried in. She and
race never could get on, and when she was away in
don during the war she had a rare old time, nursing
ers, and going about with all kinds of queer people
race didn't approve of. Then she had some sort
love-affair with some quite low-down sort of fellow,
ok says ; I think he was one of them dirty Russians
ants to blow us all to smithereens—as if there hadn't
enough people blown up in the war already ! Any-
, his grace made a dreadful fuss, and stopped sup-
, and sent for her ladyship home, and ever since
she's been just mad to be off with somebody. Full
tions, she is. Makes me tired, I can tell you. Now,
sorry for his grace. I can see what he thinks. Poor
eman ! And then to be taken up for murder

and put in gaol, just like one of them nasty tramp
Fancy ! "

Ellen, having exhausted her breath and finish
cleaning off the bloodstains, paused and straighten
her back.

" Hard work it is," she said, " rubbing ; I quite ache

" If you would allow me to help you," said Mr. Bu
ter, appropriating the hot water, the benzene bottle, a
the sponge.

He turned up another breadth of the skirt.

" Have you got a brush handy," he asked, " to t
this mud off ? "

" You're as blind as a bat, Mr. Bunter," said Ell
giggling. " Can't you see it just in front of you ? "

" Ah, yes," said the valet. " But that's not as har
one as I'd like. Just you run and get me a real hard o
there's a dear good girl, and I'll fix this for you."

" Cheek ! " said Ellen. " But," she added, relent
before the admiring gleam in Mr. Bunter's eye, "
get the clothes-brush out of the hall for you. That'
hard as a brick-bat, that is."

No sooner was she out of the room than Mr. Bu
produced a pocket-knife and two more pill-boxes.
a twinkling of an eye he had scraped the surface of
skirt in two places and written two fresh labels :

" Gravel from Lady Mary's skirt, about 6 in. f
hem."

" Silver sand from hem of Lady Mary's skirt."

He added the date, and had hardly pocketed the b
when Ellen returned with the clothes-brush. The cl
ing process continued for some time, to the accomp
ment of desultory conversation. A third stain on
skirt caused Mr. Bunter to stare critically.

" Hullo ! " he said. " Her ladyship's been trying
hand at cleaning this herself."

" What ? " cried Ellen. She peered closely at
mark, which at one edge was smeared and whitened,
had a slightly greasy appearance.

Well, I never," she exclaimed, " so she has ! tever's that for, I wonder ? And her pretending to ill she couldn't raise her head off the pillow. She's one, she is."

Couldn't it have been done before ? " suggested Bunter.

Well, she might have been at it between the day the ain was killed and the inquest," agreed Ellen, ough you wouldn't think that was a time to choose to learning domestic work. *She* ain't much hand at it, ow, for all her nursing. I never believed that came ything."

She's used soap," said Mr. Bunter, benzening away utely. " Can she boil water in her bedroom ? "

Now, whatever should she do that for, Mr. Bun- " exclaimed Ellen, amazed. " You don't think she s a kettle ? I bring up her morning tea. Ladyships t want to boil water."

No," said Mr. Bunter, " and why didn't she get it the bathroom ? " He scrutinised the stain more ully still. " Very amateurish," he said ; " distinctly eurish. Interrupted, I fancy. An energetic young but not ingenious."

he last remarks were addressed in confidence to the ene bottle. Ellen had put her head out of the win- to talk to the gamekeeper.

. . . . . .

he Police Superintendent at Ripley received Lord at first frigidly, and later, when he found out who as, with a mixture of the official attitude to private tives and the official attitude to a Duke's son.

've come to you," said Wimsey, " because you can is combin'-out business a sight better'n an amateur nyself. I suppose your fine organisation's hard at already, what ? "

Naturally," said the Superintendent, " but it's not ether easy to trace a motor-cycle without knowing

the number. Look at the Bournemouth Murder." H shook his head regretfully and accepted a Villar y Villa

"We didn't think at first of connecting him with th number-plate business," the Superintendent went on i a careless tone which somehow conveyed to Lor Peter that his own remarks within the last half-hour ha established the connection in the official mind for th first time. "Of course, if he'd been seen going throug Ripley *without* a number-plate he'd have been notice and stopped, whereas with Mr. Foulis's he was as safe a —as the Bank of England," he concluded in a burst o originality.

"Obviously," said Wimsey. "Very agitatin' for th parson, poor chap. So early in the mornin', too. I sup pose it was just taken to be a practical joke?"

"Just that," agreed the Superintendent, "but, aft hearing what you have to tell us, we shall use our be efforts to get the man. I expect his grace won't be a too sorry to hear he's found. You may rely on us, a if we find the man or the number-plates——"

"Lord bless us and save us, man," broke in Lo Peter with unexpected vivacity, "you're not goin' waste your time lookin' for the number-plates. Wh d'you s'pose he'd pinch the curate's plates for if wanted to advertise his own about the neighbourhoo Once you drop on them you've got his name and addre s'long as they're in his trousers pocket you're up a gu tree. Now, forgive me, Superintendent, for shov along with my opinion, but I simply can't bear to thi of you takin' all that trouble for nothin'—dragg ponds an' turnin' over rubbish-heaps to look for numb plates that ain't there. You just scour the railw stations for a young man six foot one or two with No. 10 shoe, and dressed in a Burberry that's lost its b and with a deep scratch on one of his hands. And l here, here's my address, and I'll be very grateful you'll let me know anything that turns up. So awkw for my brother, y'know, all this. Sensitive man; f

eenly. By the way, I'm a very uncertain bird—
ys hoppin' about ; you might wire me any news in
licate, to Riddlesdale and to town—110 Piccadilly.
ays delighted to see you, by the way, if ever you're
wn. You'll forgive me slopin' off now, won't you ?
got a lot to do."

. . . . . .

eturning to Riddlesdale, Lord Peter found a new
or seated at the tea-table. At Peter's entry he rose
towering height, and extended a shapely, expressive
l that would have made an actor's fortune. He was
in actor, but he found this hand useful, nevertheless,
ne exploitation of dramatic moments. His magni-
it build and the nobility of his head and mask were
essive ; his features were flawless ; his eyes ruth-

The Dowager Duchess had once remarked : " Sir
ey Biggs is the handsomest man in England, and no
an will ever care twopence for him." He was, in
thirty-eight, and a bachelor, and was celebrated for
hetoric and his suave but pitiless dissection of hostile
esses. The breeding of canaries was his unexpected
y, and besides their song he could appreciate no
c but revue airs. He answered Wimsey's greeting
is beautiful, resonant, and exquisitely controlled
. Tragic irony, cutting contempt, or a savage in-
ation were the emotions by which Sir Impey Biggs
ed court and jury ; he prosecuted murderers of
nnocent, defended in actions for criminal libel, and,
ng others, was himself as stone. Wimsey expressed
elf delighted to see him in a voice, by contrast, more
y and hesitant even than usual.

"You just come from Jerry ? " he asked. " Fresh
, please Fleming. How is he ? Enjoyin' it ? I
r knew a fellow like Jerry for gettin' the least possible
of any situation. I'd rather like the experience
lf, you know ; only I'd hate bein' shut up and
hin' the other idiots bunglin' my case. No reflection

on Murbles and you, Biggs. I mean myself—I mean t man who'd be me if I was Jerry. You follow me ? "

" I was just saying to Sir Impey," said the Duche " that he really must make Gerald say what he was doi in the garden at three in the morning. If only I'd be at Riddlesdale none of this would have happened. course, *we* all know that he wasn't doing any harm, b we can't expect the jurymen to understand that. T lower orders are so prejudiced. It is absurd of Ger not to realise that he must speak out. He has *no* co sideration."

" I am doing my very best to persuade him, Duches said Sir Impey, " but you must have patience. Lawy enjoy a little mystery, you know. Why, if everybo came forward and told the truth, the whole truth, a nothing but the truth straight out, we should all re to the workhouse."

" Captain Cathcart's death is very mysterious," s the Duchess, " though when I think of the things t have come out about him it really seems quite provid tial, as far as my sister-in-law is concerned."

" I s'pose you couldn't get 'em to bring it in ' De by the Visitation of God,' could you, Biggs ? " sugges Lord Peter. " Sort of judgment for wantin' to ma into our family, what ? "

" I have known less reasonable verdicts," retur Biggs dryly.. " It's wonderful what you can sugges a jury if you try. I remember once at the Liverp Assizes——"

He steered skilfully away into a quiet channel reminiscence. Lord Peter watched his statuesque p file against the fire ; it reminded him of the se beauty of the charioteer of Delphi and was abou communicative.

. . . . .

It was not until after dinner that Sir Impey ope his mind to Wimsey. The Duchess had gone to

ıd the two men were alone in the library. Peter, rupulously in evening dress, had been valeted by unter, and had been more than usually rambling and ieerful all evening. He now took a cigar, retired to ıe largest chair, and effaced himself in a complete lence.

Sir Impey Biggs walked up and down for some half-our, smoking. Then he came across with determina-on, brutally switched on a reading-lamp right into ter's face, sat down opposite to him, and said :

" Now, Wimsey, I want to know all you know."

" Do you, though ? " said Peter. He got up, dis-nnected the reading-lamp, and carried it away to a de-table.

" No bullying of the witness, though," he added, and inned.

" I don't care so long as you wake up," said Biggs, nperturbed. " Now then."

Lord Peter removed his cigar from his mouth, con-dered it with his head on one side, turned it carefully ver, decided that the ash could hang on to its parent af for another minute or two, smoked without speak-g until collapse was inevitable, took the cigar out ain, deposited the ash entire in the exact centre of e ash-tray, and began his statement, omitting only e matter of the suit-case and Bunter's information otained from Ellen.

Sir Impey Biggs listened with what Peter irritably scribed as a cross-examining countenance, putting a arp question every now and again. He made a few otes, and, when Wimsey had finished, sat tapping his ote-book thoughtfully.

" I think we can make a case out of this," he said, even if the police don't find your mysterious man. enver's silence is an awkward complication, of course." e hooded his eyes for a moment. " Did you say you'd it the police on to find the fellow ? "

" Yes."

"Have you a very poor opinion of the police?"

"Not for that kind of thing. That's in their line; they have all the facilities, and do it well."

"Ah! You expect to find the man, do you?"

"I hope to."

"Ah! What do you think is going to happen to my case if you *do* find him, Wimsey?"

"What do I——"

"See here, Wimsey," said the barrister, "you are not a fool, and it's no use trying to look like a country policeman. You are really trying to find this man?"

"Certainly."

"Just as you like, of course, but my hands are rather tied already. Has it ever occurred to you that perhaps he'd better not be found?"

Wimsey stared at the lawyer with such honest astonishment as actually to disarm him.

"Remember this," said the latter earnestly, "that if once the police get hold of a thing or a person it's no use relying on my, or Murbles's, or anybody's professional discretion. Everything's raked out into the light of common day, and very common it is. Here's Denver accused of murder, and he refuses in the most categorical way to give me the smallest assistance."

"Jerry's an ass. He doesn't realise——"

"Do you suppose," broke in Biggs, "I have not made it my business to *make* him realise? All he says is 'They can't hang me; I didn't kill the man, though I think it's a jolly good thing he's dead. It's no business of theirs what I was doing in the garden.' Now I ask you, Wimsey, is that a reasonable attitude for a man in Denver's position to take up?"

Peter muttered something about "Never had any sense."

"Had anybody told Denver about this other man?"

"Something vague was said about footsteps at the inquest, I believe."

'That Scotland Yard man is your personal friend, told?"

'Yes."

'So much the better. He can hold his tongue."

'Look here, Biggs, this is all damned impressive and sterious, but what are you gettin' at? Why shouldn't y hold of the beggar if I can?"

'I'll answer that question by another." Sir Impey ned forward a little. "Why is Denver screening n?"

Sir Impey Biggs was accustomed to boast that no ness could perjure himself in his presence undetected. he put the question, he released the other's eyes m his, and glanced down with finest cunning at msey's long, flexible mouth and nervous hands. nen he glanced up again a second later he met the eyes ssing, guarded and inscrutable, through all the changes pressive of surprised enlightenment; but by that e it was too late; he had seen a little line at the corner the mouth fade out, and the fingers relax ever so ghtly. The first movement had been one of relief.

'B'Jove!" said Peter. "I never thought of that. hat sleuths you lawyers are. If that's so, I'd better careful, hadn't I? Always was a bit rash. My mother rs——"

'You're a clever devil, Wimsey," said the barrister. may be wrong, then. Find your man by all means. ere's just one other thing I'd like to ask. Whom are u screening?"

'Look here, Biggs," said Wimsey, "you're not paid ask that kind of question here, you know. You can ly well wait till you get into court. It's your job to ke the best of the stuff we serve up to you, not to give the third degree. Suppose I murdered Cathcart rself——"

'You didn't."

'I know I didn't, but if I did I'm not goin' to have u askin' questions and lookin' at me in that tone of

voice. However, just to oblige you, I don't mind sayin' plainly that I don't know who did away with the fellow. When I do I'll tell you."

"You will?"

"Yes, I will, but not till I'm sure. You people can make such a little circumstantial evidence go such a damn long way, you might hang me while I was only in the early stages of suspectin' myself."

"H'm!" said Biggs. "Meanwhile, I tell you candidly, I am taking the line that they can't make out a case."

"Not proven, eh? Well, anyhow, Biggs, I swear my brother shan't hang for lack of my evidence."

"Of course not," said Biggs, adding inwardly: "but you hope it won't come to that."

A spurt of rain plashed down the wide chimney and sizzled on the logs.

. . . . . .

"Craven Hotel,
"Strand, W.C.,
"*Tuesday*.

"My Dear Wimsey,—A line as I promised, to report progress, but it's precious little. On the journey up I sat next to Mrs. Pettigrew-Robinson and opened and shut the window for her and looked after her parcels. She mentioned that when your sister roused the household on Thursday morning she went first to Mr. Arbuthnot's room—a circumstance which the lady seemed to think odd, but which is natural enough when you come to think of it, the room being directly opposite the head of the staircase. It was Mr. Arbuthnot who knocked up the Pettigrew Robinsons, and Mr. P. ran downstairs immediately. Mrs. P. then saw that Lady Mary was looking very faint, and tried to support her. Your sister threw her off—rudely, Mrs. P. says—declined 'in a most savage manner' all offers of assistance, rushed to her own

room, and locked herself in. Mrs. Pettigrew-Robinson listened at the door ' to make sure,' as she says, ' that everything was all right,' but, hearing her moving about and slamming cupboards, she concluded that she would have more chance of poking her finger into the pie downstairs, and departed.

" If Mrs. Marchbanks had told me this, I admit I should have thought the episode worth looking into, but I feel strongly that if I were dying I should still lock the door between myself and Mrs. Pettigrew-Robinson. Mrs. P. was quite sure that at no time had Lady Mary anything in her hand. She was dressed as described at the inquest—a long coat over her pyjamas (sleeping suit was Mrs. P's expression), stout shoes, and a woolly cap, and she kept these garments on throughout the subsequent visit of the doctor. Another odd little circumstance is that Mrs. Pettigrew-Robinson (who was awake, you remember, from 2. a.m. onwards) is certain that just *before* Lady Mary knocked on Mr. Arbuthnot's door she heard a door slam somewhere in the passage. I don't know what to make of this—perhaps there's nothing in it, but I just mention it.

" I've had a rotten time in town. Your brother-in-law elect was a model of discretion. His room at the Albany is a desert from a detecting point of view ; no papers except a few English bills and receipts, and invitations. I looked up a few of his inviters, but they were mostly men who had met him at the club or knew him in the Army, and could tell me nothing about his private life. He is known at several night-clubs. I made the round of them last night—or, rather, this morning. General verdict : generous but impervious. By the way, poker seems to have been his great game. No suggestion of anything crooked. He won pretty consistently on the whole, but never very spectacularly.

"I think the information we want must be in Paris.

I have written to the Sûreté and the Crédit Lyonnais to produce his papers, especially his account and cheque-book.

"I'm pretty dead with yesterday's and to-day's work. Dancing all night on top of a journey is a jolly poor joke. Unless you want me, I'll wait here for the papers, or I may run over to Paris myself.

"Cathcart's books here consist of a few modern French novels of the usual kind, and another copy of *Manon* with what the catalogues call 'curious plates.' He must have had a life somewhere, mustn't he?

"The enclosed bill from a beauty specialist in Bond Street may interest you. I called on her. She says he came regularly every week when he was in England.

"I drew quite blank at King's Fenton on Sunday —oh, but I told you that. I don't think the fellow ever went there. I wonder if he slunk off up into the moor. Is it worth rummaging about, do you think? Rather like looking for a needle in a bundle of hay. It's odd about that diamond cat. You've got nothing out of the household, I suppose? It doesn't seem to fit No. 10, somehow—and yet you'd think somebody would have heard about it in the village if it had been lost. Well, so long,

"Yours ever,
"CH. PARKER."

CHAPTER IV

—AND HIS DAUGHTER, MUCH-AFRAID

The women also looked pale and wan.—
The Pilgrim's Progress.

R. BUNTER brought Parker's letter up to Lord Peter bed on the Wednesday morning. The house was nost deserted, everybody having gone to attend the ice-court proceedings at Northallerton. The thing uld be purely formal, of course, but it seemed only per that the family should be fully represented. e Dowager Duchess, indeed, was there—she had mptly hastened to her son's side and was living roically in furnished lodgings, but the younger Duch- thought her mother-in-law more energetic than nified. There was no knowing what she might do if to herself. She might even give an interview to a vspaper reporter. Besides, at these moments of crisis ife's right place is at her husband's side. Lady Mary s ill, and nothing could be said about that, and if er chose to stay smoking cigarettes in his pyjamas ile his only brother was undergoing public humilia- n, that was only what might be expected. Peter took er his mother. How that eccentric strain had got into family her grace could not imagine, for the Dowager ne of a good Hampshire family ; there must have en some foreign blood somewhere. Her own duty s clear, and she would do it.

Lord Peter was awake, and looked rather fagged, though he had been sleuthing in his sleep. Mr. nter wrapped him solicitously in a brilliant Oriental e, and placed the tray on his knees.

" Bunter," said Lord Peter rather fretfully, " your *café au lait* is the one tolerable incident in this beastly place."

" Thank you, my lord. Very chilly again this morning, my lord, but not actually raining."

Lord Peter frowned over his letter.

" Anything in the paper, Bunter ? "

" Nothing urgent, my lord. A sale next week at Northbury Hall—Mr. Fleetwhite's library, my lord—a Caxton *Confessio Amantis*——"

" What's the good of tellin' me that when we're stuck up here for God knows how long ? I wish to heaven I'd stuck to books and never touched crime. Did you send those specimens up to Lubbock ? "

" Yes, my lord," said Bunter gently. Dr. Lubbock was the " analytical gentleman."

" Must have facts," said Lord Peter, " facts. When I was a small boy I always hated facts. Thought of 'em as nasty, hard things, all knobs. Uncompromisin'."

" Yes, my lord. My old mother——"

" Your mother, Bunter ? I didn't know you had one. I always imagined you were turned out ready-made, so to speak. 'Scuse me. Infernally rude of me. Beg your pardon, I'm sure."

" Not at all, my lord. My mother lives in Kent, my lord, near Maidstone. Seventy-five, my lord, and an extremely active woman for her years, if you'll excuse my mentioning it. I was one of seven."

" That is an invention, Bunter. I know better. You are unique. But I interrupted you. You were goin' to tell me about your mother."

" She always says, my lord, that facts are like cows. If you look them in the face hard enough they generally run away. She is a very courageous woman, my lord."

Lord Peter stretched out his hand impulsively, but Mr. Bunter was too well trained to see it. He had, indeed, already begun to strop a razor. Lord Peter sud-

enly bundled out of bed with a violent jerk and sped cross the landing to the bathroom.

Here he revived sufficiently to lift up his voice in Come unto these Yellow Sands." Thence, feeling in Purcellish mood, he passed to " I attempt from Love's ever to Fly," with such improvement of spirits that, gainst all custom, he ran several gallons of cold water to the bath and sponged himself vigorously. Where-re, after a rough towelling, he burst explosively from e bathroom, and caught his shin somewhat violently gainst the lid of a large oak chest which stood at the ead of the staircase—so violently, indeed, that the lid ted with the shock and shut down with a protesting ng.

Lord Peter stopped to say something expressive and caress his leg softly with the palm of his hand. Then thought struck him. He set down his towels, soap, onge, loofah, bath-brush, and other belongings, and ietly lifted the lid of the chest.

Whether, like the heroine of *Northanger Abbey*, he pected to find anything gruesome inside was not parent. It is certain that, like her, he beheld nothing ore startling than certain sheets and counterpanes atly folded at the bottom. Unsatisfied, he lifted the p one of these gingerly and inspected it for a few oments in the light of the staircase window. He was st returning it to its place, whistling softly the while, hen a little hiss of indrawn breath caused him to look with a start.

His sister was at his elbow. He had not heard her me, but she stood there in her dressing-gown, her hands utched together on her breast. Her blue eyes were lated till they looked almost black, and her skin seemed arly the colour of her ash-blonde hair. Wimsey ared at her over the sheet he held in his arms, and the rror in her face passed over into his, stamping them ddenly with the mysterious likeness of blood-relation-ip.

Peter's own impression was that he stared " like a stuck pig " for about a minute. He knew, as a matter of fact, that he had recovered himself in a fraction of a second. He dropped the sheet into the chest and stood up.

" Hullo, Polly, old thing," he said, " where've you been hidin' all this time ? First time I've seen you. 'Fraid you've been havin' a pretty thin time of it."

He put his arm round her, and felt her shrink.

" What's the matter ? " he demanded. " What's up old girl ? Look here, Mary, we've never seen enough of each other, but I am your brother. Are you in trouble ? Can't I——"

" Trouble ? " she said. " Why, you silly old Peter of course I'm in trouble. Don't you know they've killed my man and put my brother in prison ? Isn't that enough to be in trouble about ? " She laughed and Peter suddenly thought, " She's talking like some body in a blood-and-thunder novel." She went on more naturally. " It's all right, Peter, truly—only my head's so bad. I really don't know what I'm doing. What are you after ? You made such a noise, I came out. I thought it was a door banging."

" You'd better toddle back to bed," said Lord Peter. " You're gettin' all cold. Why do girls wear such mimsy little pyjimjams in this damn cold climate. There, don't you worry. I'll drop in on you later and we'll have a jolly old pow-wow, what ? "

" Not to-day—not to-day, Peter. I'm going mad I think." (" Sensation fiction again," thought Peter. " Are they trying Gerald to-day ? "

" Not exactly trying," said Peter, urging her gently along to her room. " It's just formal, y'know. The jolly old magistrate bird hears the charge read, and then old Murbles pops up and says please he want only formal evidence given as he has to instruct counsel. That's Biggy, y'know. Then they hear the evidence of arrest, and Murbles says old Gerald reserves his defence

at's all till the Assizes—evidence before the Grand ry—a lot of bosh! That'll be early next month, I ppose. You'll have to buck up and be fit by then."

Mary shuddered.

'No—no! Couldn't I get out of it? I couldn't go rough it all again. I should be sick. I'm feeling ful. No, don't come in. I don't want you. Ring bell for Ellen. No, let go; go away! I don't nt you, Peter!"

Peter hesitated, a little alarmed.

'Much better not, my lord, if you'll excuse me," d Bunter's voice at his ear. "Only produce hys- ics," he added, as he drew his master gently from the or. "Very distressing for both parties, and altogether productive of results. Better to wait for the return her grace, the Dowager."

'Quite right," said Peter. He turned back to pick his paraphernalia, but was dexterously forestalled. ce again he lifted the lid of the chest and looked in.

'What did you say you found on that skirt, Bunter?"

'Gravel, my lord, and silver sand."

'Silver sand."

. . . . .

Behind Riddlesdale Lodge the moor stretched starkly ay and upward. The heather was brown and wet, l the little streams had no colour in them. It was o'clock, but there was no sunset. Only a paleness l moved behind the thick sky from east to west all . Lord Peter, tramping back after a long and fruit- search for tidings of the man with the motor-cycle, ced the dull suffering of his gregarious spirit. "I h old Parker was here," he muttered, and squelched vn a sheep-track.

He was making, not directly for the Lodge, but for a nhouse about two and a half miles distant from it, wn as Grider's Hole. It lay almost due north of dlesdale village, a lonely outpost on the edge of the

moor, in a valley of fertile land between two wide swells of heather. The track wound down from the height called Whemmeling Fell, skirted a vile swamp, and crossed the little river Ridd about half a mile before reaching the farm. Peter had small hope of hearing any news at Grider's Hole, but he was filled with a sullen determination to leave no stone unturned. Privately, however, he felt convinced that the motor-cycle had come by the high road, Parker's investigations notwithstanding, and perhaps passed directly through King's Fenton without stopping or attracting attention. Still, he had said he would search the neighbourhood, and Grider's Hole was in the neighbourhood. He paused to relight his pipe, then squelched steadily on. The path was marked with stout white posts at regular intervals, and presently with hurdles. The reason for this was apparent as one came to the bottom of the valley, for only a few yards on the left began the stretch of rough, reedy tussocks, with slobbering black bog between them, in which anything heavier than a water-wagtail would speedily suffer change into a succession of little bubbles. Wimsey stooped for an empty sardine-tin which lay, horridly battered, at his feet, and slung it idly into the quag. It struck the surface with a noise like a wet kiss, and vanished instantly. With that instinct which prompts one, when depressed, to wallow in every circumstance of gloom, Peter leaned sadly upon the hurdles and abandoned himself to a variety of shallow considerations upon (1) The vanity of human wishes ; (2) Mutability ; (3) First love ; (4) The decay of idealism ; (5) The aftermath of the Great War ; (6) Birth-control ; and (7) The fallacy of free-will. This was his nadir, however. Realising that his feet were cold and his stomach empty, and that he had still some miles to go, he crossed the stream on a row of slippery stepping-stones and approached the gate of the farm which was not an ordinary five-barred one, but solid and uncompromising. A man was leaning over it, suck

ıg a straw. He made no attempt to move at Wimsey's ɔproach. " Good evening," said that nobleman in a ɔrightly manner, laying his hand on the catch. " Chilly, n't it ? "

The man made no reply, but leaned more heavily, ıd breathed. He wore a rough coat and breeches, ıd his leggings were covered with manure.

" Seasonable, of course, what ? " said Peter. " Good ɔr the sheep, I daresay. Makes their wool curl, and ɔ on."

The man removed the straw and spat in the direction Peter's right boot.

" Do you lose many animals in the bog ? " went on eter, carelessly unlatching the gate, and leaning upon in the opposite direction. " I see you have a good all all round the house. Must be a bit dangerous in ıe dark, what, if you're thinkin' of takin' a little evenin' roll with a friend ? "

The man spat again, pulled his hat over his forehead, ıd said briefly :

" What doost 'a want ? "

" Well," said Peter, " I thought of payin' a little iendly call on Mr.—on the owner of this farm, that to say. Country neighbours, and all that. Lonely nd of country, don't you see. Is he in, d'ye think ? "

The man grunted.

" I'm glad to hear it," said Peter ; "it's so uncom- only jolly findin' all you Yorkshire people so kind and ɔspitable, what ? Never mind who you are, always seat at the fireside and that kind of thing. Excuse e, but do you know you're leanin' on the gate so as I ın't open it ? I'm sure it's a pure oversight, only you ayn't realise that just where you're standin' you get e maximum of leverage. What an awfully charmin' ɔuse this is, isn't it ? All so jolly stark and grim and l the rest of it. No creepers or little rose-grown ɔrches or anything suburban of that sort. Who lives it ? "

The man surveyed him up and down for some moments, and replied, " Mester Grimethorpe."

" No, does he now ? " said Lord Peter. " To think of that. Just the fellow I want to see. Model farmer, what ? Wherever I go throughout the length and breadth of the North Riding I hear of Mr. Grimethorpe. ' Grimethorpe's butter is the best ' ; ' Grimethorpe's fleeces Never go to pieces ' ; ' Grimethorpe's pork Melts on the fork ' ; ' For Irish stews Take Grimethorpe's ewes ' ; ' A tummy lined with Grimethorpe's beef, Never, never comes to grief.' It has been my life's ambition to see Mr. Grimethorpe in the flesh. And you no doubt are his sturdy henchman and right-hand man. You leap from bed before the breaking day, To milk the kine amid the scented hay. You when the shades of evening gather deep, Home from the mountain lead the mild-eyed sheep. You, by the ingle's red and welcoming blaze, Tell your sweet infant tales of olden days ! A wonderful life, though a trifle monotonous p'raps in the winter. Allow me to clasp your honest hand."

Whether the man was moved by this lyric outburst or whether the failing light was not too dim to strike a pale sheen from the metal in Lord Peter's palm, at any rate he moved a trifle back from the gate.

" Thanks awfully, old bean," said Peter, stepping briskly past him. " I take it I shall find Mr. Grimethorpe in the house ? "

The man said nothing till Wimsey had proceeded about a dozen yards up the flagged path, then he hailed him, but without turning round.

" Mester ! "

" Yes, old thing ? " said Peter affably, returning.

" Happen he'll set dog on tha."

" You don't say so ? " said Peter. " The faithful hound welcomes the return of the prodigal. Scenes of family rejoicing. ' My own long lost boy ! ' Songs and speeches, beer all round for the delighted tenantry

es by the old fireside, till the rafters ring and all smoked hams tumble down to join in the revelry. od night, sweet Prince, until the cows come home and dogs eat Jezebel in the portion of Jezreel when the nds of spring are on winter's traces. I suppose," he ed to himself, " they will have finished tea."

s Lord Peter approached the door of the farm his its rose. He enjoyed paying this kind of visit. Al-ugh he had taken to detecting as he might, with ther conscience or constitution, have taken to Indian np—for its exhilarating properties—at a moment en life seemed dust and ashes, he had not primarily detective temperament. He expected next to hing from inquiries at Grider's Hole, and, if he had, might probably have extracted all the information he ited by a judicious display of Treasury notes to the m man at the gate. Parker would in all likelihood e done so ; he was paid to detect and to do nothing , and neither his natural gifts nor his education (at row-in-Furness Grammar School) prompted him to y into side-tracks at the beck of an ill-regulated gination. But to Lord Peter the world presented lf as an entertaining labyrinth of side-issues. He was spectable scholar in five or six languages, a musician ome skill and more understanding, something of an ert in toxicology, a collector of rare editions, an en-aining man-about-town, and a common sensationalist. had been seen at half-past twelve on a Sunday morn-walking in Hyde Park in a top-hat and frock-coat, ding the *News of the World*. His passion for the un-lored led him to hunt up obscure pamphlets in the tish Museum, to unravel the emotional history of ome-tax collectors, and to find out where his own ins led to. In this case, the fascinating problem of a kshire farmer who habitually set the dogs on casual tors imperatively demanded investigation in a per-al interview. The result was unexpected.

His first summons was unheeded, and he knocked

again. This time there was a movement, and a surly male voice called out :

" Well, let 'un in then, dang 'un—and dang *thee*," emphasised by the sound of something falling or thrown across the room.

The door was opened unexpectedly by a little girl of about seven, very dark and pretty, and rubbing her arm as though the missile had caught her there. She stood defensively, blocking the threshold, till the same voice growled impatiently :

" Well, who is it ? "

" Good evening," said Wimsey, removing his hat. " I hope you'll excuse me droppin' in like this. I'm livin' at Riddlesdale Lodge."

" What of it ? " demanded the voice. Above the child's head Wimsey saw the outline of a big, thick-set man smoking in the inglenook of an immense fire-place. There was no light but the firelight, for the window was small, and dusk had already fallen. It seemed to be a large room, but a high oak settle on the farther side of the chimney ran out across it, leaving a cavern of impenetrable blackness beyond.

" May I come in ? " said Wimsey.

" If tha must, ' said the man ungraciously. " Shoot door, lass ; what art starin' at ? Go to thi moother and bid her mend thi manners for thee."

This seemed a case of the pot lecturing the kettle on cleanliness, but the child vanished hurriedly into the blackness behind the settle, and Peter walked in.

" Are you Mr. Grimethorpe ? " he asked politely.

" What if I am ? " retorted the farmer. " *I've* no call to be ashamed o' my name."

" Rather not," said Lord Peter, " nor of your farm. Delightful place, what ! My name's Wimsey, by the way—Lord Peter Wimsey, in fact, the Duke of Denver's brother, y'know. I'm sure I hate interruptin' you—you must be busy with the sheep and all that—but I thought you wouldn't mind if I just ran over in a neighbourly

Lonely sort of country, ain't it ? I like to know
ople next door, and all that sort of thing. I'm
o London, you see, where people live pretty thick
ground. I suppose very few strangers ever pass
ay ? "
one," said Mr. Grimethorpe, with decision.
ell, perhaps it's as well," pursued Lord Peter.
es one appreciate one's home circle more, what ?
think one sees too many strangers in town.
ng like one's family when all's said and done—
lon't you know. You a married man, Mr. Grime-
? "
hat the hell's that to you ? " growled the farmer,
ng on him with such ferocity that Wimsey looked
quite nervously for the dogs before-mentioned.
n, nothin'," he replied, " only I thought that
in' little girl might be yours."
nd if I thought she weren't," said Mr. Grime-
, " I'd strangle the bitch and her mother together.
hast got to say to that ? "
matter of fact, the remark, considered as a con-
onal formula, seemed to leave so much to be
d that Wimsey's natural loquacity suffered a
check. He fell back, however, on the usual
ce of the male, and offered Mr. Grimethorpe a
thinking to himself as he did so :
hat a hell of a life the woman must lead."
farmer declined the cigar with a single word,
as silent. Wimsey lit a cigarette for himself and
e meditative, watching his companion. He was a
f about forty-five, apparently, rough, harsh, and
r-beaten, with great ridgy shoulders and short,
highs—a bull-terrier with a bad temper. Decid-
at delicate hints would be wasted on such an
sm, Wimsey adopted a franker method.
o tell the truth, Mr. Grimethorpe," he said, " I
blow in without any excuse at all. Always best
vide oneself with an excuse for a call, what ?

Though it's so perfectly delightful to see you—I m
no excuse might appear necessary. But fact is,
looking for a young man—a—an acquaintance of mi
who said he'd be roamin' about this neighbourh
some time or other about now. Only I'm afraid I
have missed him. You see, I've only just got over
Corsica—interestin' country and all that, Mr. Gri
thorpe, but a trifle out of the way—and from what
friend said I think he must have turned up here abo
week ago and found me out. Just my luck. Bu
didn't leave his card, so I can't be quite sure, you
You didn't happen to come across him by any cha
Tall fellow with big feet on a motor-cycle with a
car. I thought he might have come rootin' about
Hullo! d'you know him?"

The farmer's face had become swollen and al
black with rage.

"What day sayst tha?" he demanded thickly.

"I thould think last Wednesday night or Thu
morning," said Peter, with a hand on his heavy ma
cane.

"I knew it," growled Mr. Grimethorpe. "—
slut, and all these dommed women wi' their dirty
Look here, mester. The tyke were a friend o' t
Well, I wor at Stapley Wednesday and Thurs
tha knew that, didn't tha? And so did thi f
didn't 'un? An' if I hadn't, it'd 'a' bin the wor
'un. He'd 'a' been in Peter's Pot if I'd 'a' cot 'u
that's where tha'll be thesen in a minute, blast tha
if I find 'un sneakin' here again, I'll blast every b
a's body and send 'un to look for thee there."

And with these surprising words he made for
throat like a bull-dog.

"That won't do," said Peter, disengaging himse
an ease which astonished his opponent, and ca
his wrist in a grip of mysterious and excruciating
"'Tisn't wise, y'know—might murder a fellow lik
Nasty business, murder. Coroner's inquest a

sort of thing. Counsel for the Prosecution askin' rts of inquisitive questions, and a feller puttin' a round your neck. Besides, your method's a bit tive. Stand still, you fool, or you'll break your Feelin' better? That's right. Sit down. You'll nto trouble one of these days, behavin' like that you're asked a civil question."

Get out o' t'house," said Mr. Grimethorpe sullenly.

Certainly," said Peter. "I have to thank you for a entertainin' evenin', Mr. Grimethorpe. I'm sorry an give me no news of my friend——"

. Grimethorpe sprang up with a blasphemous lation, and made for the door, shouting "Jabez!" Peter stared after him for a moment, and then l round the room.

omething fishy here," he said. "Fellow knows hin'. Murderous sort of brute. I wonder——" peered round the settle, and came face to face a woman—a dim patch of whiteness in the thick w.

ou?" she said, in a low, hoarse gasp. "You? are mad to come here. Quick, quick! He has for the dogs."

e placed her two hands on his breast, thrusting rgently back. Then, as the firelight fell upon his she uttered a stifled shriek and stood petrified—a sa-head of terror.

dusa was beautiful, says the tale, and so was this n; a broad white forehead under massed, dusky black eyes glowing under straight brows, a wide, nate mouth—a shape so wonderful that even in strenuous moment sixteen generations of feudal ege stirred in Lord Peter's blood. His hands closed ners instinctively, but she pulled herself hurriedly and shrank back.

Madam," said Wimsey, recovering himself, "I don't ——"

thousand questions surged up in his mind, but

before he could frame them a long yell, and anoth and then another came from the back of the house.

"Run, run!" she said. "The dogs! My God, God, what will become of me? Go, if you don't w to see me killed. Go, go! Have pity!"

"Look here," said Peter, "can't I stay and p tect——"

"You can stay and murder me," said the wom "Go!"

Peter cast Public School tradition to the winds, cau up his stick, and went. The brutes were at his heels he fled. He struck the foremost with his stick, and dropped back, snarling. The man was still leaning the gate, and Grimethorpe's hoarse voice was he shouting to him to seize the fugitive. Peter closed w him; there was a scuffle of dogs and men, and sudde Peter found himself thrown bodily over the gate. he picked himself up and ran, he heard the farmer cu ing the man and the man retorting that he couldn't h it; then the woman's voice, uplifted in a frightened w He glanced over his shoulder. The man and the wo and a second man who had now joined the party, w beating the dogs back, and seemed to be persuad Grimethorpe not to let them through. Apparently t remonstrances had some effect, for the farmer tur moodily away, and the second man called the dogs with much whip-cracking and noise. The woman something, and her husband turned furiously upon and struck her to the ground.

Peter made a movement to go back, but a str conviction that he could only make matters worse her arrested him. He stood still, and waited till had picked herself up and gone in, wiping the bl and dirt from her face with her shawl. The far looked round, shook his fist at him, and followed into the house. Jabez collected the dogs and d them back, and Peter's friend returned to lean over gate.

ter waited till the door had closed upon Mr. and Grimethorpe ; then he pulled out his handkerchief in the half-darkness, signalled cautiously to the , who slipped through the gate and came slowly to him

Thanks very much," said Wimsey, putting money his hand. " I'm afraid I've done unintentional hief."

ne man looked at the money and at him.

'Tes t' master's way wi' them as cooms t'look at sus," he said. " Tha's best keep away if so be tha a' have her blood on tha heid."

See here," said Peter, " did you by any chance a young man with a motor-cycle wanderin' round last Wednesday or thereabouts ? "

Naay. Wednesday ? T'wod be day t'mester went apley, Ah reckon, after machines. Naay, Ah seed ."

All right. If you find anybody who did, let me . Here's my name, and I'm staying at Riddlesdale e. Good night ; many thanks."

e man took the card from him and slouched back ut a word of farewell.

. . . . .

rd Peter walked slowly, his coat collar turned up his hat pulled over his eyes. This cinemato- ic episode had troubled his logical faculty. With fort he sorted out his ideas and arranged them in kind of order.

First item," said he, " Mr. Grimethorpe. A gentle- who will stick at nothing. Hefty. Unamiable. spitable. Dominant characteristic—jealousy of his astonishing wife. Was at Stapley last Wednesday Thursday buying machinery. (Helpful gentleman gate corroborates this, by the way, so that at this of the proceedings one may allow it to be a sound) Did not, therefore, see our mysterious friend

with the side-car, *if* he was there. But is disposed
think he *was* there, and has very little doubt about wh
he came for. Which raises an interestin' point. W
the side-car ? Awkward thing to tour about with. Ve
good. But if our friend came after Mrs. G. he obviou
didn't take her. Good again.

" Second item, Mrs. Grimethorpe. Very singu
item. By Jove ! " He paused meditatively to rec
struct a thrilling moment. " Let us at once admit t
if No. 10 came for the purpose suspected he had ev
excuse for it. Well ! Mrs. G. goes in terror of her h
band, who thinks nothing of knocking her down
suspicion. I wish to God—but I'd only have m
things worse. Only thing you can do for the wife
brute like that is to keep away from her. Hope th
won't be murder done. One's enough at a time. Wh
was I ? "

" Yes—well, Mrs. Grimethorpe knows somethin
and she knows somebody. She took me for someb
who had every reason for not coming to Grider's H
Where was she, I wonder, while I was talking to Gri
thorpe ? She wasn't in the room. Perhaps the c
warned her. No, that won't wash ; I told the c
who I was. Aha ! wait a minute. Do I see light ?
looked out of the window and saw a bloke in an a
Burberry. No. 10 is a bloke in an aged Burberry. N
let's suppose for a moment she takes me for No.
What does she do ? She sensibly keeps out of the wa
can't think why I'm such a fool as to turn up. T
when Grimethorpe runs out shoutin' for the ken
man, she nips down with her life in her hands to
her—her—shall we say boldly her lover ?—to get a
She finds it isn't her lover, but only a gaping ass
fear) a very comin'-on disposition. New comprom
position. She tells the ass to save himself and he
by clearin' out. Ass clears—not too gracefully.
next instalment of this enthrallin' drama will be sh
in this theatre—when ? I'd jolly well like to know

tramped on for some time.

ll the same," he retorted upon himself, " all this s no light on what No. 10 was doing at Riddles- Lodge."

the end of his walk he had reached no conclusion. Whatever happens," he said to himself, " and if be done without danger to her life, I must see Grimethorpe again."

CHAPTER V

THE RUE ST. HONORÉ AND THE RUE DE PAIX

I think it was the cat.—H.M.S. Pinafore

Mr. Parker sat disconsolate in a small *apartem* in the Rue St. Honoré. It was three o'clock in afternoon. Paris was full of a subdued but chee autumn sunlight, but the room faced north, and depressing, with its plain, dark furniture and its dese air. It was a man's room, well appointed after the n ner of a discreet club ; a room that kept its dead own counsel imperturbably. Two large saddlebag chai crimson leather stood by the cold hearth. On mantelpiece was a bronze clock, flanked by two poli German shells, a stone tobacco-jar, and an Orie brass bowl containing a long-cold pipe. There several excellent engravings in narrow pearwood fra and the portrait in oils of a rather florid lady of period of Charles II. The window-curtains were c son, and the floor covered with a solid Turkey ca Opposite the fireplace stood a tall mahogany book- with glass doors, containing a number of English French classics, a large collection of books on hi and international politics, various French novels, a n ber of works on military and sporting subjects, a famous French edition of the *Decameron* with the ditional plates. Under the window stood a large bu

Parker shook his head, took out a sheet of p and began to write a report. He had breakfaste coffee and rolls at seven ; he had made an exhau search of the flat ; he had interviewed the conci

manager of the Crédit Lyonnais, and the Prefect of
e for the Quartier, and the result was very poor
ed.

formation obtained from Captain Cathcart's papers:
fore the war Denis Cathcart had undoubtedly been
h man. He had considerable investments in Russia
Germany and a large share in a prosperous vine-
in Champagne. After coming into his property at
ge of twenty-one he had concluded his three years'
ence at Cambridge, and had then travelled a good
visiting persons of importance in various countries,
apparently studying with a view to a diplomatic
r. During the period from 1913 to 1918 the story
by the books became intensely interesting, baffling,
depressing. At the outbreak of war he had taken a
nission in the 15th ——shires. With the help of the
ue-book, Parker reconstructed the whole economic
of a young British officer—clothes, horses, equip-
, travelling, wine and dinners when on leave, bridge
, rent of the flat in the Rue St. Honoré, club sub-
tions, and what not. This outlay was strictly
erate and proportioned to his income. Receipted
neatly docketed, occupied one drawer of the
au, and a careful comparison of these with the
ue-book and the returned cheques revealed no dis-
ncy. But, beyond these, there appeared to have
another heavy drain upon Cathcart's resources.
nning in 1913, certain large cheques, payable to self,
ared regularly at every quarter, and sometimes at
er intervals. As to the destination of these sums,
ureau preserved the closest discretion ; there were
ceipts, no memoranda of their expenditure.
e great crash which in 1914 shook the credits of
orld was mirrored in little in the pass-book. The
ts from Russian and German sources stopped dead ;
from the French shares slumped to a quarter of
riginal amount, as the tide of war washed over the
ards and carried the workers away. For the first

year or so there were substantial dividends from capit
invested in French *rentes* ; then came an ominous ent
of 20,000 francs on the credit side of the account, an
six months after, another of 30,000 francs. After th
the landslide followed fast. Parker could picture tho
curt notes from the Front, directing the sale of Gover
ment securities, as the savings of the past six ye
whirled away in the maelstrom of rising prices and c
lapsing currencies. The dividends grew less and le s a
ceased ; then, more ominous still, came a series
debits representing the charges on renewal of p
missory notes.

About 1918 the situation had become acute, a
several entries showed a desperate attempt to put matt
straight by gambling in foreign exchanges. There w
purchases, through the bank, of German marks, Russ
roubles, and Roumanian lei. Mr. Parker sighed sy
pathetically, when he saw this, thinking of £12 worth
these delusive specimens of the engraver's art laid
in his own desk at home. He knew them to be wa
paper, yet his tidy mind could not bear the thought
destroying them. Evidently Cathcart had found ma
and roubles very broken reeds.

It was about this time that Cathcart's pass-book be
to reveal the paying in of various sums in cash, s
large, some small, at irregular dates and with no
ticular consistency. In December, 1919, there had b
one of these amounting to as much as 35,000 fra
Parker at first supposed that these sums might re
sent dividends from some separate securities w
Cathcart was handling for himself without pas
them through the bank. He made a careful searc
the room in the hope of finding either the bonds th
selves or at least some memorandum concerning th
but the search was in vain, and he was forced to
clude either that Cathcart had deposited them in s
secret place or that the credits in question represe
some different source of income.

athcart had apparently contrived to be demobilised
ost at once (owing, no doubt, to his previous fre-
ntation of distinguished governmental personages),
to have taken a prolonged holiday upon the Riviera.
sequently a visit to London coincided with the
isition of £700, which, converted into francs at
hen rate of exchange, made a very respectable item
e account. From that time on, the outgoings and
pts presented a similar aspect and were more or
evenly balanced, the cheques to self becoming rather
r and more frequent as time went on, while during
the income from the vineyard began to show signs
covery.

r. Parker noted down all this information in detail,
leaning back in his chair, looked round the flat.
elt, not for the first time, a distaste for his pro-
on, which cut him off from the great masculine
munity whose members take each other for granted
respect their privacy. He relighted his pipe, which
gone out, and proceeded with his report.

formation obtained from Monsieur Turgeot, the
ager of the Crédit Lyonnais, confirmed the evidence
ie pass-book in every particular. Monsieur Cath-
had recently made all his payments in notes, usually
otes of small denominations. Once or twice he had
an overdraft—never very large, and always made
vithin a few months. He had, of course, suffered a
nution of income, like everybody else, but the
unt had never given the bank any uneasiness. At
noment it was some 14,000 francs on the right side.
sieur Cathcart was always very agreeable, but not
municative—*très correct*.

formation obtained from the concierge :

ne did not see much of Monsieur Cathcart, but he
très gentil. He never failed to say, "*Bon jour*,
gois," when he came in or out. He received visitors
times—gentlemen in evening dress. One made
-parties. Monsieur Bourgois had never directed

any ladies to his rooms ; except once, last Februar when he had given a lunch-party to some ladies *t comme il faut* who brought with them his fiancée, *u jolie blonde*. Monsieur Cathcart used the flat as a *pi à terre*, and often he would shut it up and go away f several weeks or months. He was *un jeune homme t rangé*). He had never kept a valet. Madame Leblan the cousin of one's late wife, kept his *appartement* clea Madame Leblanc was very respectable. But certain monsieur might have Madame Leblanc's address.

Information obtained from Madame Leblanc :

Monsieur Cathcart was a charming young man, a very pleasant to work for. Very generous and to a great interest in the family. Madame Leblanc w desolated to hear that he was dead, and on the eve his marriage to the daughter of the English milad Madame Leblanc had seen Mademoiselle last year wh she visited Monsieur Cathcart in Paris ; she consider the young lady very fortunate. Very few young m were as serious as Monsieur Cathcart, especially wh they were so good-looking. Madame Leblanc had h experience of young men, and she could relate ma histories if she were disposed, but none of Monsie Cathcart. He would not always be using his room he had the habit of letting her know when he would at home, and she then went round to put the flat in ord He kept his things very tidy ; he was not like Engl gentlemen in that respect. Madame Leblanc had kno many of them, who kept their affairs *sens dessus desso* Monsieur Cathcart was always very well dressed ; was particular about his bath ; he was like a woman his toilet, the poor gentleman. And so he was dead. *pauvre garçon!* Really it had taken away Mada Leblanc's appetite.

Information obtained from Monsieur the Prefect Police :

Absolutely nothing. Monsieur Cathcart had ne caught the eye of the police in any way. With reg

ne sums of money mentioned by Monsieur Parker, onsieur would give him the numbers of some of the s, efforts would be made to trace them.

Where had the money gone? Parker could think only wo destinations—an irregular establishment or a kmailer. Certainly a handsome man like Cathcart nt very well have a woman or two in his life, even out the knowledge of the concierge. Certainly a who habitually cheated at cards—if he did cheat at s—might very well have got himself into the power mebody who knew too much. It was noteworthy his mysterious receipts in cash began just as his omies were exhausted; it seemed likely that they esented irregular gains from gambling—in the os, on the exchange, or, if Denver's story had any in it, from crooked play. On the whole, Parker r inclined to the blackmailing theory. It fitted in the rest of the business, as he and Lord Peter had nstructed it at Riddlesdale.

wo or three things, however, still puzzled Parker. should the blackmailer have been trailing about Yorkshire moors with a cycle and side-car? Whose the green-eyed cat? It was a valuable trinket. Had cart offered it as part of his payment? That seemed how foolish. One could only suppose that the kmailer had tossed it away with contempt. The cat in Parker's possession, and it occurred to him that ght be worth while to get a jeweller to estimate its e. But the side-car was a difficulty, the cat was a ulty, and, more than all, Lady Mary was a difficulty. hy had Lady Mary lied at the inquest? For that ad lied, Parker had no manner of doubt. He dis- ved the whole story of the second shot which had ened her. What had brought her to the con- tory door at three o'clock in the morning? Whose the suit-case—if it was a suit-case—that had lain ealed among the cactus-plants? Why this pro- ed nervous breakdown, with no particular symp-

toms, which prevented Lady Mary from giving eviden
before the magistrate or answering her brother's i
quiries ? Could Lady Mary have been present at t
interview in the shrubbery ? If so, surely Wimsey a
he would have found her footprints. Was she in leag
with the blackmailer ? That was an unpleasant though
Was she endeavouring to help her fiancé ? She had
allowance of her own—a generous one, as Parker kn
from the Duchess. Could she have tried to assist Cat
cart with money ? But in that case, why not tell all s
knew ? The worst about Cathcart—always supposing th
card-sharping were the worst—was now matter of pub
knowledge, and the man himself was dead. If she kn
the truth, why did she not come forward and save h
brother ?

And at this point he was visited by a thought ev
more unpleasant. If, after all, it had not been Den
whom Mrs. Marchbanks had heard in the library, b
someone else—someone who had likewise an appoi
ment with the blackmailer—someone who was on
side as against Cathcart—who knew that there might
danger in the interview. Had he himself paid pro
attention to the grass lawn between the house and
thicket ? Might Thursday morning perhaps have
vealed here and there a trodden blade that rain and
had since restored to uprightness ? Had Peter and
found *all* the footsteps in the wood ? Had some m
trusted hand fired that shot at close quarters ? O
again—*whose was the green-eyed cat ?*

Surmises and surmises, each uglier than the l
thronged into Parker's mind. He took up a photogr
of Cathcart with which Wimsey had supplied him,
looked at it long and curiously. It was a dark, handso
face ; the hair was black, with a slight wave, the n
large and well shaped, the big, dark eyes at once plea
and arrogant. The mouth was good, though a l
thick, with a hint of sensuality in its close curves ;
chin showed a cleft. Frankly, Parker confessed to h

it did not attract him; he would have been inclined smiss the man as a "Byronic blighter," but ex- nce told him that this kind of face might be power- ith a woman, either for love or hatred.

incidences usually have the air of being practical on the part of Providence. Mr. Parker was shortly favoured—if the term is a suitable one—with a al display of this Olympian humour. As a rule, kind of thing did not happen to him; it was more in sey's line. Parker had made his way from modest nings to a respectable appointment in the C.I.D. r by a combination of hard work, shrewdness, and on than by spectacular displays of happy guess- or any knack for taking fortune's tide at the flood. time, however, he was given a "leading" from , and it was only part of the nature of things and that he should have felt distinctly ungrateful for

finished his report, replaced everything tidily in esk and went round to the police-station to arrange the Prefect about the keys and the fixing of the It was still early evening and not too cold; he mined, therefore, to banish gloomy thoughts by a *cognac* in the Boul' Mich', followed by a stroll gh the Paris of the shops. Being of a kindly, stic nature, indeed, he turned over in his mind the of buying something Parisian for his elder sister, was unmarried and lived a rather depressing life in w-in-Furness. Parker knew that she would take tic delight in some filmy scrap of lace underwear no one but herself would ever see. Mr. Parker ot the kind of man to be deterred by the difficulty ying ladies' underwear in a foreign language; he not very imaginative. He remembered that a d judge had one day asked in court what a cami- vas, and recollected that there had seemed to be g particularly embarrassing about the garment explained. He determined that he would find a

really Parisian shop, and ask for a camisole. That wou
give him a start, and then mademoiselle would show hi
other things without being asked further.

Accordingly, towards six o'clock, he was strolli
along the Rue de la Paix with a little carton under
arm. He had spent rather more money than he i
tended, but he had acquired knowledge. He knew
certain what a camisole was, and he had grasped for t
first time in his life that crêpe-de-Chine had no rec
nisable relation to crape, and was astonishingly expe
sive for its bulk. The young lady had been charmin
sympathetic, and, without actually insinuating anythi
had contrived to make her customer feel just a little
of a dog. He felt that his French accent was improvi
The street was crowded with people, slowly saunteri
past the brilliant shop-windows. Mr. Parker stopp
and gazed nonchalantly over a gorgeous display of jew
lery, as though hesitating between a pearl necklace valu
at 80,000 francs and a pendant of diamonds and aquam
rines set in platinum.

And there, balefully winking at him from unde
label inscribed " *Bonne fortune* " hung a green-eyed

The cat stared at Mr. Parker, and Mr. Parker sta
at the cat. It was no ordinary cat. It was a cat wit
personality. Its tiny arched body sparkled with d
monds, and its platinum paws, set close together, and
erect and glittering tail were instinct in every line w
the sensuous delight of friction against some belo
object. Its head, cocked slightly to one side, seemed
demand a titillating finger under the jaw. It wa
minute work of art, by no journeyman hand.
Parker fished in his pocket-book. He looked from
cat in his hand to the cat in the window. They w
alike. They were astonishingly alike. They were id
tical. Mr. Parker marched into the shop.

" I have here," said Mr. Parker to the young ma
the counter, " a diamond cat which greatly reser
one which I perceive in your window. Could you

obligingness to inform me what would be the value such a cat ? "

The young man replied instantly :

" But certainly, monsieur. The price of the cat is oo francs. It is, as you perceive, made of the finest terials. Moreover, it is the work of an artist ; it is rth more than the market value of the stones."

' It is, I suppose, a mascot ? "

' Yes, monsieur ; it brings great good luck, especially cards. Many ladies buy these little objects. We have re other mascots, but all of this special design are of ilar quality and price. Monsieur may rest assured t his cat is a cat of pedigree."

' I suppose that such cats are everywhere obtainable Paris," said Mr. Parker nonchalantly.

' But no, monsieur. If you desire to match your cat ecommend you to do it quickly. Monsieur Briquet d only a score of these cats to begin with, and there now only three left, including the one in the window. elieve that he will not make any more. To repeat a ng often is to vulgarise it. There will, of course, be er cats——"

' I don't want another cat," said Mr. Parker, suddnly interested. " Do I understand you to say that s such as this are only sold by Monsieur Briquet ? at my cat originally came from this shop ? "

' Undoubtedly, monsieur, it is one of our cats. These le animals are made by a workman of ours—a genius o is responsible for many of our finest articles."

' It would, I imagine, be impossible to find out to om this cat was originally sold ? "

' If it was sold over the counter for cash it would be ficult, but if it was entered in our books it might not impossible to discover, if monsieur desired it."

' I do desire it very much," said Parker, producing card. " I am an agent of the British police, and s of great importance that I should know to whom s cat originally belonged."

"In that case," said the young man, "I shall do better to inform monsieur the proprietor."

He carried away the card into the back premises, and presently emerged with a stout gentleman, whom he introduced as Monsieur Briquet.

In Monsieur Briquet's private office the books of the establishment were brought out and laid on the desk.

"You will understand, monsieur," said Monsieur Briquet, "that I can only inform you of the names and addresses of such purchasers of these cats as have had an account sent them. It is, however, unlikely that an object of such value was paid for in cash. Still, with rich Anglo-Saxons, such an incident may occur. We need not go back further than the beginning of the year when these cats were made." He ran a podgy finger down the pages of the ledger. "The first purchase was on January 19th."

Mr. Parker noted various names and addresses, and at the end of half an hour Monsieur Briquet said in a final manner:

"That is all, monsieur. How many names have you there?"

"Thirteen," said Parker.

"And there are still three cats in stock—the original number was twenty—so that four must have been sold for cash. If monsieur wishes to verify the matter we can consult the day-book."

The search in the day-book was longer and more tiresome, but eventually four cats were duly found to have been sold; one on January 31st, another on February 6th, the third on May 17th, and the last on August 9th.

Mr. Parker had risen, and embarked upon a long stream of compliments and thanks, when a sudden association of ideas and dates prompted him to hand Cathcart's photograph to Monsieur Briquet and ask whether he recognised it.

Monsieur Briquet shook his head.

" I am sure he is not one of our regular customers," said, " and I have a very good memory for faces. make a point of knowing anyone who has any con-lerable account with me. And this gentleman has not erybody's face. But we will ask my assistants."

The majority of the staff failed to recognise the photo-aph, and Parker was on the point of putting it back in pocket-book when a young lady, who had just ished selling an engagement-ring to an obese and lerly Jew, arrived, and said, without any hesitation : ' *Mais oui, je l'ai vu, ce monseiur-là.* It is the English-n who bought a diamond cat for the *jolie blonde.*"

' Mademoiselle," said Parker eagerly, " I beseech u to do me the favour to remember all about it."

' *Parfaitement*," said she. " It is not the face one uld forget, especially when one is a woman. The ntleman bought a diamond cat and paid for it—no, I wrong. It was the lady who bought it, and I remem-now to have been surprised that she should pay like t at once in money, because ladies do not usually ry such large sums. The gentleman bought too. He ught a diamond and tortoiseshell comb for the lady wear, and then she said she must give him something *ur porter bonheur*, and asked me for a mascot that was od for cards. I showed her some jewels more suitable a gentleman, but she saw these cats and fell in love h them, and said he should have a cat and nothing e ; she was sure it would bring him good hands. She ed me if it was not so, and I said, ' Undoubtedly, and nsieur must be sure never to play without it,' and he ghed very much, and promised always to have it upon n when he was playing."

' And how was she, this lady ? "

' Blonde, monsieur, and very pretty ; rather tall and lte, and very well dressed. A big hat and dark blue tume. *Quoi encore ? Voyons*—yes, she was a eigner."

' English ? "

" I do not know. She spoke French very, very well, almost like a French person, but she had just the little suspicion of accent."

" What language did she speak with the gentleman ? "

" French, monsieur. You see, we were speaking together, and they both appealed to me continually, and so all the talk was in French. The gentleman spoke French *à merveille*, it was only by his clothes and a *je ne sais quoi* in his appearance that I guessed he was English. The lady spoke equally fluently, but one remarked just the accent from time to time. Of course, I went away from them once or twice to get goods from the window, and they talked then ; I do not know in what language."

" Now, mademoiselle, can you tell me how long ago this was ? "

" *Ah, mon Dieu, ça c'est plus difficile. Monsieur sait que les jours se suivent et se ressemblent. Voyons.*"

" We can see by the day-book," put in Monsieur Briquet, " on what occasion a diamond comb was sold with a diamond cat."

" Of course," said Parker hastily. " Let us go back."

They went back and turned to the January volume where they found no help. But on February 6th they read :

Peigne en écaille et diamants . . .	f.7,500
Chat en diamants (Dessin C-5) . .	f.5,000

" That settles it," said Parker gloomily.

" Monsieur does not appear content," suggested the jeweller.

" Monsieur," said Parker, " I am more grateful than I can say for your very great kindness, but I will frankly confess that, of all the twelve months in the year, I had rather it had been any other."

Parker found this whole episode so annoying to his feelings that he bought two comic papers and, carrying them away to Boudet's at the corner of the Rue Auguste Léopold, read them solemnly through over his dinner

way of settling his mind. Then, returning to his dest hotel, he ordered a drink, and sat down to npose a letter to Lord Peter. It was a slow job, and did not appear to relish it very much. His concluding agraph was as follows :

" I have put all these things down for you without ny comment. You will be able to draw your own nferences as well as I can—better, I hope, for my wn are perplexing and worrying me no end. They nay be all rubbish—I hope they are ; I daresay omething will turn up at your end to put quite a ifferent interpretation upon the facts. But I do eel that they must be cleared up. I would offer to and over the job, but another man might jump at onclusions even faster than I do, and make a mess f it. But of course, if you say so, I will be taken uddenly ill at any moment. Let me know. If you nink I'd better go on grubbing about over here, an you get hold of a photograph of Lady Mary Vimsey, and find out if possible about the diamond omb and the green-eyed cat—also at exactly what ate Lady Mary was in Paris in February. Does ne speak French as well as you do ? Let me know ow you are getting on.

" Yours ever,

" CHARLES PARKER."

Ie re-read the letter and report carefully and sealed n up. Then he wrote to his sister, did up his parcel ly, and rang for the valet de chambre.

I want this letter sent off at once, rêgistered," he , " and the parcel is to go to-morrow as a *colis postal*." fter which he went to bed, and read himself to sleep a commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews.

. . . . .

ord Peter's reply arrived by return :

"DEAR CHARLES,—Don't worry. I don't like the look of things myself frightfully, but I'd rather you tackled the business than anyone else. As you say, the ordinary police bloke doesn't mind whom he arrests, provided he arrests someone, and is altogether a most damnable fellow to have poking into one's affairs. I'm putting my mind to getting my brother cleared—that *is* the first consideration, after all, and really anything else would be better than having Jerry hanged for a crime he didn't commit. Whoever did it, it's better the right person should suffer than the wrong. So go ahead.

"I enclose two photographs—all I can lay hands on for the moment. The one in nursing-kit is rather rotten, and the other's all smothered up in a big hat.

"I had a damn' queer little adventure here on Wednesday, which I'll tell you about when we meet. I've found a woman who obviously knows more than she ought, and a most promising ruffian—only I'm afraid he's got an alibi. Also I've got a faint suggestion of a clue about No. 10. Nothing much happened at Northallerton, except that Jerry was of course committed for trial. My mother is here, thank God! and I'm hoping she'll get some sense out of Mary, but she's been worse the last two days—Mary, I mean, not my mother—beastly sick and all that sort of thing. D. Thingummy—who is an ass—can't make it out. Mother says it's as clear as noonday, and she'll stick it if I have patience a day or two. I made her ask about the comb and the cat. M. denies the cat altogether, but admits to a diamond comb bought in Paris—says she bought it herself. It's in town—I'll get and send it on. She says she can't remember where she bought it, has lost the bill, but it didn't cost anything like 7,500 francs. She was in Paris from February 2nd to February 20th. My chief business now is to see Lubbock and clear up a little matter concerning silver sand.

" The Assizes will be the first week in November—in fact, the end of next week. This rushes things a bit, but it doesn't matter, because they can't try him there ; nothing will matter but the Grand Jury, who are bound to find a true bill on the face of it. After that we can hang matters up as long as we like. It's going to be a deuce of a business, Parliament sitting and all. Old Biggs is fearfully perturbed under that marble outside of his. I hadn't really grasped what a fuss it was to try peers. It's only happened about once in every sixty years, and the procedure's about as old as Queen Elizabeth. They have to appoint a Lord High Steward for the occasion, and God knows what. They have to make it frightfully clear in the Commission that it *is* only for the occasion, because, somewhere about Richard III's time, the L.H.S. was such a terrifically big pot that he got to ruling the roost. So when Henry IV came to the throne, and the office came into the hands of the Crown, he jolly well kept it there, and now they only appoint a man *pro tem.* for the Coronation and shows like Jerry's. The King always pretends not to know there isn't a L.H.S. till the time comes, and is no end surprised at having to think of somebody to take on the job. Did you know all this ? I didn't. I got it out of Biggy.

" Cheer up. Pretend you don't know that any of these people are relations of mine. My mother sends you her kindest regards and what not, and hopes she'll see you again soon. Bunter sends something correct and respectful ; I forget what.

" Yours in the brotherhood of detection,

" P.W."

It may as well be said at once that the evidence from the photographs was wholly inconclusive.

CHAPTER VI

MARY QUITE CONTRARY

I am striving to take into public life what any man gets from his mother.—Lady Astor.

On the opening day of the York Assizes, the Grand Jury brought in a true bill, against Gerald, Duke of Denver, for murder. Gerald, Duke of Denver, being accordingly produced in the court, the Judge affected to discover—what, indeed, every newspaper in the country had been announcing to the world for the last fortnight—that he, being but a common or garden judge with a plebeian jury, was incompetent to try a peer of the realm. He added, however, that he would make it his business to inform the Lord Chancellor (who also, for the last fortnight, had been secretly calculating the accommodation in the Royal Gallery and choosing lords to form the Select Committee). Order being taken accordingly, the noble prisoner was led away.

. . . . . .

A day or two later, in the gloom of a London afternoon, Mr. Charles Parker rang the bell of a second-floor flat at No. 110 Piccadilly. The door was opened by Bunter, who informed him with a gracious smile that Lord Peter had stepped out for a few minutes but was expecting him, and would he kindly come in and wait

"We only came up this morning," added the valet "and are not quite straight yet, sir, if you will excuse us. Would you feel inclined for a cup of tea?"

Parker accepted the offer, and sank luxuriously into a corner of the Chesterfield. After the extraordinary dis-

comfort of French furniture there was solace in the enervating springiness beneath him, the cushions behind his head, and Wimsey's excellent cigarettes. What Bunter had meant by saying that things were " not quite straight yet " he could not divine. A leaping wood fire was merrily reflected in the spotless surface of the black baby grand ; the mellow calf bindings of Lord Peter's rare editions glowed softly against the black and primrose walls ; the vases were filled with tawny chrysanthemums; the latest editions of all the papers were on the table—as though the owner had never been absent.

Over his tea Mr. Parker drew out the photographs of Lady Mary and Denis Cathcart from his breast pocket. He stood them up against the teapot and stared at them, looking from one to the other as if trying to force a meaning from their faintly smirking, self-conscious gaze. He referred again to his Paris notes, ticking off various points with a pencil. " Damn ! " said Mr. Parker, gazing at Lady Mary. " Damn—damn—damn——"

The train of thought he was pursuing was an extraordinarily interesting one. Image after image, each rich in suggestion, crowded into his mind. Of course, one couldn't think properly in Paris—it was so uncomfortable and the houses were central heated. Here, where so many problems had been unravelled, there was a good fire. Cathcart had been sitting before the fire. Of course, he wanted to think out a problem. When cats sat staring into the fire they were thinking out problems. It was odd he should not have thought of that before. When the green-eyed cat sat before the fire one sank right down into a sort of rich, black, velvety suggestiveness which was most important. It was luxurious to be able to think so lucidly as this, because otherwise it would be a pity to exceed the speed limit—and the black moors were reeling by so fast. But now he had really got the formula he wouldn't forget it again. The connection was just there—close, thick, richly coherent.

"The glass-blower's cat is bompstable," said Mr. Parker aloud and distinctly.

"I'm charmed to hear it," replied Lord Peter, with a friendly grin. "Had a good nap, old man?"

"I—what?" said Mr. Parker. "Hullo! Watcher mean, nap? I had got hold of a most important train of thought, and you've put it out of my head. What was it? Cat—cat—cat——" He groped wildly.

"You *said* 'The glass-blower's cat is bompstable,'" retorted Lord Peter. "It's a perfectly rippin' word, but I don't know what you mean by it."

"Bompstable?" said Mr. Parker, blushing slightly. "Bomp—oh, well, perhaps you're right—I may have dozed off. But, you know, I thought I'd just got the clue to the whole thing. I attached the greatest importance to that phrase. Even now—— No, now I come to think of it, my train of thought doesn't seem quite to hold together. What a pity. I thought it was so lucid."

"Never mind," said Lord Peter. "Just back?"

"Crossed last night. Any news?"

"Lots."

"Good?"

"No."

Parker's eyes wandered to the photographs.

"I don't believe it," he said obstinately. "I'm damned if I'm going to believe a word of it."

"A word of what?"

"Of whatever it is."

"You'll have to believe it, Charles, as far as it goes," said his friend softly, filling his pipe with decided little digs of the fingers. "I don't say "—dig—" that Mary "—dig—" shot Cathcart "—dig, dig—" but she has lied "—dig—" again and again."—Dig, dig—" She knows who did it "—dig—" she was prepared for it "—dig—" she's malingering and lying to keep the fellow shielded"—dig—" and we shall have to make her speak." Here he struck a match and lit the pipe in a series of angry little puffs.

"If you can think," said Mr. Parker, with some heat, "that that woman"—he indicated the photographs—"had any hand in murdering Cathcart, I don't care what your evidence is, you—hang it all, Wimsey, she's your own sister."

"Gerald is my brother," said Wimsey quietly. "You don't suppose I'm exactly enjoying this business, do you? But I think we shall get along very much better if we try to keep our tempers."

"I'm awfully sorry," said Parker. "Can't think why I said that—rotten bad form—beg pardon, old man."

"The best thing we can do," said Wimsey, "is to look the evidence in the face, however ugly. And I don't mind admittin' that some of it's a positive gargoyle.

"My mother turned up at Riddlesdale on Friday. She marched upstairs at once and took possession of Mary, while I drooped about in the hall and teased the cat, and generally made a nuisance of myself. *You* know. Presently old Dr. Thorpe called. I went and sat on the chest on the landing. Presently the bell rings and Ellen comes upstairs. Mother and Thorpe popped out and caught her just outside Mary's room, and they jibber-jabbered a lot, and presently mother came barging down the passage to the bathroom with her heels tapping and her earrings simply dancing with irritation. I sneaked after 'em to the bathroom door, but I couldn't see anything, because they were blocking the doorway, but I heard mother say, 'There, now, what did I tell you'; and Ellen said, 'Lawks! your grace, who'd 'a' thought it?'; and my mother said, 'All I can say is, if I had to depend on you people to save me from being murdered with arsenic or that other stuff with the name like anemones*—you know what I mean—that that very attractive-looking man with the preposterous beard used to make away with his wife and mother-in-

* Antimony? The Duchess appears to have had Dr. Pritchard's case in mind.

law (who was vastly the more attractive of the two, poor thing), I might be being cut up and analysed by Dr. Spilsbury now—such a horrid, distasteful job he must have of it, poor man, and the poor little rabbits, too.' " Wimsey paused for breath, and Parker laughed in spite of his anxiety.

" I won't vouch for the exact words," said Wimsey, " but it was to that effect—you know my mother's style. Old Thorpe tried to look dignified, but mother ruffled up like a little hen and said, looking beadily at him : ' In *my* day we called that kind of thing hysterics and naughtiness. *We* didn't let girls pull the wool over our eyes like that. I suppose *you* call it a neurosis, or a suppressed desire, or a reflex, and coddle it. You might have let that silly child make herself really ill. You are all perfectly ridiculous, and no more fit to take care of yourselves than a lot of babies—not but what there are plenty of poor little things in the slums that look after whole families and show more sense than the lot of you put together. I am very angry with Mary, advertising herself in this way, and she's not to be pitied.' You know," said Wimsey, " I think there's often a great deal in what one's mother says."

" I believe you," said Parker.

" Well, I got hold of mother afterwards and asked her what it was all about. She said Mary wouldn't tell her anything about herself or her illness ; just asked to be let alone. Then Thorpe came along and talked about nervous shock—said he couldn't understand these fits of sickness, or the way Mary's temperature hopped about. Mother listened, and told him to go and see what the temperature was now. Which he did, and in the middle mother called him away to the dressing-table. But bein' a wily old bird, you see, she kept her eyes on the looking-glass, and nipped round just in time to catch Mary stimulatin' the thermometer to terrific leaps on the hot-water bottle."

" Well, I'm damned ! " said Parker.

" So was Thorpe. All mother said was, that if he vasn't too old a bird yet to be taken in by that hoary rick he'd no business to be gettin' himself up as a grey-aired family practitioner. So then she asked the girl bout the sick fits—when they happened, and how ften, and was it after meals or before, and so on, and at ast she got out of them that it generally happened a it after breakfast and occasionally at other times. Mother said she couldn't make it out at first, because he'd hunted all over the room for bottles and things, ill at last she asked who made the bed, thinkin', you ee, Mary might have hidden something under the mat-ress. So Ellen said she usually made it while Mary had er bath. ' When's that ? ' says mother. ' Just before er breakfast,' bleats the girl. ' God forgive you all for set of nincompoops,' says my mother. ' Why didn't ou say so before ? ' So away they all trailed to the bath-oom, and there, sittin' up quietly on the bathroom shelf mong the bath salts and the Elliman's embrocation and ne Kruschen feelings and the toothbrushes and things, vas the family bottle of ipecacuanha—three-quarters mpty ! Mother said—well, I told you what she said. By ne way, how do you spell ipecacuanha ? "

Mr. Parker spelt it.

" Damn you ! " said Lord Peter. " I *did* think I'd umped you that time. I believe you went and looked up beforehand. *No* decent-minded person would now how to spell ipecacuanha out of his own head. nyway, as you were saying, it's easy to see which side f the family has the detective instinct."

" I didn't say so——"

" I know. Why didn't you ? I think my mother's ilents deserve a little acknowledgment. I said so to er, as a matter of fact, and she replied in these memor-ole words : ' My dear child, you can give it a long ame if you like, but I'm an old-fashioned woman and call it mother-wit, and it's so rare for a man to have it nat if he does you write a book about him and call him

Sherlock Holmes.' However, apart from all that, I said to mother (in private, of course), ' It's all very well, but I can't believe that Mary has been going to all this trouble to make herself horribly sick and frighten us all just to show off. Surely she isn't that sort.' Mother looked at me as steady as an owl, and quoted a whole lot of examples of hysteria, ending up with the servant-girl who threw paraffin about all over somebody's house to make them think it was haunted, and finished up—that if all these new-fangled doctors went out of their way to invent subconsciousness and kleptomania, and complexes and other fancy descriptions to explain away when people had done naughty things, she thought one might just as well take advantage of the fact."

" Wimsey," said Parker, much excited, " did she mean she suspected something ? "

" My dear old chap," replied Lord Peter, " whatever can be known about Mary by putting two and two together my mother knows. I told her all *we* knew up to that point, and she took it all in, in her funny way, you know, never answering anything directly, and then she put her head on one side and said : ' If Mary had listened to me, and done something useful instead of that V.A.D. work, which never came to much, if you ask me —not that I have anything against V.A.D.'s in a general way, but that silly woman Mary worked under was the most terrible snob on God's earth—and there were very much more sensible things which Mary might really have done well, only that she was so crazy to get to London—I shall always say it was the fault of that ridiculous club—what could you expect of a place where you ate such horrible food, all packed into an underground cellar painted pink and talking away at the top of their voices, and never any evening dress—only Soviet jumpers and side-whiskers. Anyhow, I've told that silly old man what to say about it, and they'll never be able to think of a better explanation for themselves. Indeed, you know," said Peter, " I think if any of them

start getting inquisitive, they'll have mother down on them like a ton of bricks."

"What do you really think yourself?" asked Parker.

"I haven't come yet to the unpleasantest bit of the lot," said Peter. "I've only just heard it, and it did give me a nasty jar, I'll admit. Yesterday I got a letter from Lubbock saying he would like to see me, so I trotted up here and dropped in on him this morning. You remember I sent him a stain off one of Mary's skirts which Bunter had cut out for me? I had taken a squint at it myself, and didn't like the look of it, so I sent it up to Lubbock, *ex abundantia cautelæ;* and I'm sorry to say he confirms me. It's human blood, Charles, and I'm afraid it's Cathcart's."

"But—I've lost the thread of this a bit."

"Well, the skirt must have got stained the day Cathcart—died, as that was the last day on which the party was out on the moors, and if it had been there earlier Ellen would have cleaned it off. Afterwards Mary strenuously resisted Ellen's efforts to take the skirt away, and made an amateurish effort to tidy it up herself with soap. So I think we may conclude that Mary knew the stains were there, and wanted to avoid discovery. She told Ellen that the blood was from a grouse—which must have been a deliberate untruth."

"Perhaps," said Parker, struggling against hope to make out a case for Lady Mary, "she only said, 'Oh! one of the birds must have bled,' or something like that."

"I don't believe," said Peter, "that one could get a great patch of human blood on one's clothes like that and not know what it was. She must have knelt right in it. It was three or four inches across."

Parker shook his head dismally, and consoled himself by making a note.

"Well, now," went on Peter, "on Wednesday night everybody comes in and dines and goes to bed except Cathcart, who rushes out and stays out. At 11.50 the

gamekeeper, Hardraw, hears a shot which may very well have been fired in the clearing where the—well, let's say the accident—took place. The time also agrees with the medical evidence about Cathcart having already been dead three or four hours when he was examined at 4.30. Very well. At 3 a.m. Jerry comes home from somewhere or other and finds the body. As he is bending over it, Mary arrives in the most apropos manner from the house in her coat and cap and walking shoes. Now what is her story? She says that at three o'clock she was awakened by a shot. Now nobody else heard that shot, and we have the evidence of Mrs. Pettigrew-Robinson, who slept in the next room to Mary, with her window open according to her immemorial custom, that she lay broad awake from 2 a.m. till a little after 3 a.m., when the alarm was given, and heard no shot. According to Mary, the shot was loud enough to waken her on the other side of the building. It's odd, isn't it, that the person already awake should swear so positively that she heard nothing of a noise loud enough to waken a healthy young sleeper next door? And, in any case, *if* that was the shot that killed Cathcart, he can barely have been dead when my brother found him—and again, in that case, how was there time for him to be carried up from the shrubbery to the conservatory?"

"We've been over all this ground," said Parker, with an expression of distaste. "We agreed that we couldn't attach any importance to the story of the shot."

"I'm afraid we've got to attach a great deal of importance to it," said Lord Peter gravely. "Now, what does Mary do? Either she thought the shot——"

"There was no shot."

"I know that. But I'm examining the discrepancies of her story. She said she did not give the alarm because she thought it was probably only poachers. But, if it was poachers, it would be absurd to go down and investigate. So she explains that she thought it might be burglars. Now how does she dress to go and look for

ırglars ? What would you or I have done ? I think e would have taken a dressing-gown, a stealthy kind pair of slippers, and perhaps a poker or a stout stick—ɔt a pair of walking shoes, a coat, and a cap, of all ıings ! "

" It was a wet night," mumbled Parker.

" My dear chap, if it's burglars you're looking for you ɔn't expect to go and hunt them round the garden. our first thought is that they're getting into the house, ıd your idea is to slip down quietly and survey them om the staircase or behind the dining-room door. Any-ɔw, fancy a present-day girl, who rushes about bare-ɛaded in all weathers, stopping to embellish herself in cap for a burglar-hunt—damn it all, Charles, it won't ash, you know ! And she walks straight off to the ɔnservatory and comes upon the corpse, exactly as if ıe knew where to look for it beforehand."

Parker shook his head again.

" Well, now. She sees Gerald stooping over Cath-rt's body. What does she say ? Does she ask what's e matter ? Does she ask who it is ? She exclaims : O God ! Gerald, you've killed him,' and *then* she ys, as if on second thoughts, ' Oh, it's Denis ! What ıs happened ? Has there been an accident ? ' Now, ɔes that strike you as natural ? "

" No. But it rather suggests to me that it wasn't athcart she expected to see there, but somebody else."

" Does it ? It rather sounds to me as if she was etending not to know who it was. First she says, 'ou've killed him ! ' and then, recollecting that she ı't supposed to know who ' he ' is, she says, ' Why, s Denis ! ' "

" In any case, then, if her first exclamation was nuine, she didn't expect to find the man dead."

" No—no—we must remember that. The death *was* surprise. Very well. Then Gerald sends Mary up r help. And here's where a little bit of evidence comes that you picked up and sent along. Do you remember

what Mrs. Pettigrew-Robinson said to you in the train? "

"About the door slamming on the landing, do you mean?"

"Yes. Now I'll tell you something that happened to me the other morning. I was burstin' out of the bathroom in my usual breezy way when I caught myself a hell of a whack on that old chest on the landin', and the lid lifted up and shut down, *plonk!* That gave me an idea, and I thought I'd have a squint inside. I'd got the lid up and was lookin' at some sheets and stuff that were folded up at the bottom, when I heard a sort of gasp, and there was Mary, starin' at me, as white as a ghost. She gave me a turn, by Jove, but nothin' like the turn I'd given her. Well, she wouldn't say anything to me, and got hysterical, and I hauled her back to her room. But I'd seen something on those sheets."

"What?"

"Silver sand."

"Silver——"

"D'you remember those cacti in the greenhouse, and the place where somebody'd put a suit-case or something down?"

"Yes."

"Well, there was a lot of silver sand scattered about —the sort people stick round some kinds of bulbs and things."

"And that was inside the chest too?"

"Yes. Wait a moment. After the noise Mrs Pettigrew-Robinson heard, Mary woke up Freddy and then the Pettigrew-Robinsons—and then what?"

"She locked herself into her room."

"Yes. And shortly afterwards she came down and joined the others in the conservatory, and it was at this point everybody remembered noticing that she was wearing a cap and coat and walking shoes over pyjamas and bare feet."

"You are suggesting," said Parker, "that Lady Mar

as already awake and dressed at three o'clock, that she ent out by the conservatory door with her suit-case, xpecting to meet the—the murderer of her—damn it, Vimsey ! "

" We needn't go so far as that," said Peter ; " we ecided that she *didn't* expect to find Cathcart dead."

" No. Well, she went, presumably to meet some- ody."

" Shall we say, *pro tem.*, she went to meet No. 10 ? " uggested Wimsey softly.

" I suppose we may as well say so. When she turned n the torch and saw the Duke stooping over Cathcart ıe thought—by Jove, Wimsey, I was right after all ! Vhen she said, ' You've killed him ! ' she meant No. ɔ—she thought it was No. 10's body."

" Of course ! " cried Wimsey. " I'm a fool ! Yes. 'hen she said, ' It's Denis—what has happened ? ' 'hat's quite clear. And, meanwhile, what did she do ith the suit-case ? "

" I see it all now," cried Parker. " When she saw that ıe body wasn't the body of No. 10 she realised that o. 10 must be the murderer. So her game was to revent anybody knowing that No. 10 had been there. ıo she shoved the suit-case behind the cacti. Then, hen she went upstairs, she pulled it out again, and hid in the oak chest on the landing. She couldn't take it • her room, of course, because if anybody'd heard her ɔme upstairs it would seem odd that she should run to ɛr room before calling the others. Then she knocked p Arbuthnot and the Pettigrew-Robinsons—she'd be ı the dark, and they'd be flustered and wouldn't see xactly what she had on. Then she escaped from Mrs. .., ran into her room, took off the skirt in which she had ıelt by Cathcart's side, and the rest of her clothes, and ıt on her pyjamas and the cap, which someone might ıve noticed, and the coat, which they *must* have noticed, ıd the shoes, which had probably left footmarks al- :ady. Then she could go down and show herself.

Meantime she'd concocted the burglar story for the Coroner's benefit."

"That's about it," said Peter. "I suppose she was so desperately anxious to throw us off the scent of No. 10 that it never occurred to her that her story was going to help implicate her brother."

"She realised it at the inquest," said Parker eagerly. "Don't you remember how hastily she grasped at the suicide theory?"

"And when she found that she was simply saving her—well, No. 10—in order to hang her brother, she lost her head, took to her bed, and refused to give any evidence at all. Seems to me there's an extra allowance of fools in my family," said Peter gloomily.

"Well, what could she have done, poor girl?" asked Parker. He had been growing almost cheerful again. "Anyway, she's cleared——"

"After a fashion," said Peter, "but we're not out of the wood yet by a long way. Why is she hand-in-glove with No. 10 who is at least a blackmailer if not a murderer? How did Gerald's revolver come on the scene? And the green-eyed cat? How much did Mary know of that meeting between No. 10 and Denis Cathcart? And if she was seeing and meeting the man she might have put the revolver into his hands any time."

"No, no," said Parker. "Wimsey, don't think such ugly things as that."

"Hell!" cried Peter, exploding. "I'll have the truth of this beastly business if we all go to the gallows together!"

At this moment Bunter entered with a telegram addressed to Wimsey. Lord Peter read as follows:

> "Party traced London; seen Marylebone Friday. Further information from Scotland Yard.—POLICE SUPERINTENDENT GOSLING, Ripley."

"Good egg!" cried Wimsey. "Now we're getting

own to it. Stay here, there's a good man, in case anything turns up. I'll run round to the Yard now. They'll send you up dinner, and tell Bunter to give you a bottle of the Chateau Yquem—it's rather decent. So long."

He leapt out of the flat, and a moment later his taxi buzzed away up Piccadilly.

CHAPTER VII

THE CLUB AND THE BULLET

He is dead, and by my hand. It were better that I were dead myself, for the guilty wretch I am.—Adventures of Sexton Blake.

Hour after hour Mr. Parker sat waiting for his friend's return. Again and again he went over the Riddlesdale Case, checking his notes here, amplifying them there, involving his tired brain in speculations of the most fantastic kind. He wandered about the room, taking down here and there a book from the shelves, strumming a few unskilful bars upon the piano, glancing through the weeklies, fidgeting restlessly. At length he selected a volume from the criminological section of the bookshelves, and forced himself to read with attention that most fascinating and dramatic of poison trials—the Seddon Case. Gradually the mystery gripped him as it invariably did, and it was with a start of astonishment that he looked up at a long and vigorous whirring of the door-bell, to find that it was already long past midnight.

His first thought was that Wimsey must have left his latchkey behind, and he was preparing a facetious greeting when the door opened—exactly as in the beginning of a Sherlock Holmes story—to admit a tall and beautiful young woman, in an extreme state of nervous agitation, with halo of golden hair, violet-blue eyes, and disordered apparel all complete ; for as she threw back her heavy travelling-coat he observed that she wore evening dress, with light green silk stockings and heavy brogue shoes thickly covered with mud.

" His lordship has not yet returned, my lady," said Mr. Bunter, " but Mr. Parker is here waiting for him, and we are expecting him at any minute now. Will your ladyship take anything ? "

" No, no," said the vision hastily, " nothing, thanks. I'll wait. Good evening, Mr. Parker. Where's Peter ? "

" He has been called out, Lady Mary," said Parker. I can't think why he isn't back yet. Do sit down."

" Where did he go ? "

" To Scotland Yard—but that was about six o'clock. I can't imagine——"

Lady Mary made a gesture of despair.

" I knew it. Oh, Mr. Parker, what am I to do ? "

Mr. Parker was speechless.

" I *must* see Peter," cried Lady Mary. " It's a matter of life and death. Can't you send for him ? "

" But I don't know where he is," said Parker. " Please, Lady Mary——"

" He's doing something dreadful—he's all *wrong*," cried the young woman, wringing her hands with desperate vehemence. " I must see him—tell him—— Oh ! did anybody ever get into such dreadful trouble ! —oh !——"

Here the lady laughed loudly and burst into tears.

" Lady Mary—I beg you—please don't," cried Mr. Parker anxiously, with a strong feeling that he was being incompetent and rather ridiculous. " Please sit down. Drink a glass of wine. You'll be ill if you cry like that. If it is crying," he added dubiously to himself. It *sounds* like hiccups. Bunter ! "

Mr. Bunter was not far off. In fact, he was just outside the door with a small tray. With a respectful " Allow me, sir," he stepped forward to the writhing Lady Mary and presented a small phial to her nose. The effect was startling. The patient gave two or three fearful whoops, and sat up, erect and furious.

" How *dare* you, Bunter ! " said Lady Mary. " Go away at once ! "

"Your ladyship had better take a drop of brandy," said Mr. Bunter, replacing the stopper in the smelling-bottle, but not before Parker had caught the pungent, reek of ammonia. "This is the 1800 Napoleon brandy my lady. Please don't snort so, if I may make the suggestion. His lordship would be greatly distressed to think that any of it should be wasted. Did your ladyship dine on the way up? No? Most unwise, my lady, to undertake a long journey on a vacant interior. I will take the liberty of sending in an omelette for your ladyship. Perhaps you would like a little snack of something yourself, sir, as it is getting late?"

"Anything you like," said Mr. Parker, waving him off hurriedly. "Now, Lady Mary, you're feeling better, aren't you? Let me help you off with your coat."

No more of an exciting nature was said until the omelette was disposed of, and Lady Mary comfortably settled on the Chesterfield. She had by now recovered her poise. Looking at her, Parker noticed how her recent illness (however produced) had left its mark upon her. Her complexion had nothing of the brilliance which he remembered; she looked strained and white, with purple hollows under her eyes.

"I am sorry I was so foolish just now, Mr. Parker," she said, looking into his eyes with a charming frankness and confidence, "but I was dreadfully distressed and I came up from Riddlesdale so hurriedly."

"Not at all," said Parker meaninglessly. "Is there anything I can do in your brother's absence?"

"I suppose you and Peter do everything together?"

"I think I may say that neither of us knows anything about this investigation which he has not communicated to the other."

"If I tell you, it's the same thing?"

"Exactly the same thing. If you can bring yourself to honour me with your confidence——"

"Wait a minute, Mr. Parker. I'm in a difficult position. I don't quite know what I ought—— Can

you tell me just how far you've got—what you have discovered ? "

Mr. Parker was a little taken aback. Although the face of Lady Mary had been haunting his imagination ever since the inquest, and although the agitation of his feelings had risen to boiling-point during this romantic interview, the official instinct of caution had not wholly deserted him. Holding, as he did, proofs of Lady Mary's complicity in the crime, whatever it was, he was not so far gone as to fling all his cards on the table.

" I'm afraid," he said, " that I can't quite tell you that. You see, so much of what we've got is only suspicion as yet. I might accidentally do great mischief to an innocent person."

" Ah ! You definitely suspect somebody, then ? "

" *In*definitely would be a better word for it," said Mr. Parker with a smile. " But if you have anything to tell us which may throw light on the matter, I beg you to speak. We may be suspecting a totally wrong person."

" I shouldn't be surprised," said Lady Mary, with a sharp, nervous little laugh. Her hand strayed to the table and began pleating the orange envelope into folds.

What do you want to know ? " she asked suddenly, with a change of tone. Parker was conscious of a new hardness in her manner—a something braced and rigid.

He opened his note-book, and as he began his questioning his nervousness left him ; the official reasserted himself.

" You were in Paris last February ? "

Lady Mary assented.

" Do you recollect going with Captain Cathcart—oh ! by the way, you speak French, I presume ? "

" Yes, very fluently."

" As well as your brother—practically without accent ? "

" Quite as well. We always had French governesses as children, and mother was very particular about it."

" I see. Well, now, do you remember going with

Captain Cathcart on February 6th to a jeweller's in the Rue de la Paix and buying, or his buying for you, a tortoiseshell comb set with diamonds and a diamond and platinum cat with emerald eyes ? "

He saw a lurking awareness come into the girl's eyes.

" Is that the cat you have been making inquiries about in Riddlesdale ? " she demanded.

It being never worth while to deny the obvious, Parker replied " Yes."

" It was found in the shrubbery, wasn't it ? "

" Had you lost it ? Or was it Cathcart's ? "

" If I said it was his——"

" I should be ready to believe you. *Was* it his ? "

" No "—a long breath—" it was mine."

" When did you lose it ? "

" That night."

" Where ? "

" I suppose in the shrubbery. Wherever you found it. I didn't miss it till later."

" Is it the one you bought in Paris ? "

" Yes."

" Why did you say before that it was not yours ? "

" I was afraid."

" And now ? "

" I am going to speak the truth."

Parker looked at her again. She met his eye frankly, but there was a tenseness in her manner which showed that it had cost her something to make her mind up.

" Very well," said Parker, " we shall all be glad of that, for I think there were one or two points at the inquest on which you didn't tell the truth, weren't there ? "

" Yes."

" Do believe," said Parker, " that I am sorry to have to ask these questions. The terrible position in which your brother is placed——"

" In which I helped to place him."

" I don't say that."

" I do. I helped to put him in gaol. Don't say I lidn't, because I did."

" Well," said Parker, " don't worry. There's plenty f time to put it all right again. Shall I go on ? "

" Yes."

" Well, now, Lady Mary, it wasn't true about hearing hat shot at three o'clock, was it ? "

" No."

" Did you hear the shot at all ? "

" Yes."

" When ? "

" At 11.50."

" What was it, then, Lady Mary, you hid behind the lants in the conservatory ? "

" I hid nothing there."

" And in the oak chest on the landing ? "

" My skirt."

" You went out—why ?—to meet Cathcart ? "

" Yes."

" Who was the other man ? "

" What other man ? "

" The other man who was in the shrubbery. A tall, air man dressed in a Burberry ? "

" There was no other man."

" Oh, pardon me, Lady Mary. We saw his foot- narks all the way up from the shrubbery to the con- ervatory."

" It must have been some tramp. I know nothing bout him."

" But we have proof that he was there—of what he lid, and how he escaped. For heaven's sake, and your rother's sake, Lady Mary, tell us the truth—for that nan in the Burberry was the man who shot Cathcart."

" No," said the girl, with a white face, " that is im- ossible."

" Why impossible ? "

" I shot Denis Cathcart myself."

. . . .

"So that's how the matter stands, you see, Lord Peter," said the Chief of Scotland Yard, rising from his desk with a friendly gesture of dismissal. "The man was undoubtedly seen at Marylebone on the Friday morning, and, though we have unfortunately lost him again for the moment, I have no doubt whatever that we shall lay hands on him before long. The delay has been due to the unfortunate illness of the porter Morrison, whose evidence has been so material. But we are wasting no time now."

"I'm sure I may leave it to you with every confidence, Sir Andrew," replied Wimsey, cordially shaking hands. "I'm diggin' away too; between us we ought to get somethin'—you in your small corner and I in mine, as the hymn says—or is it a hymn? I remember readin' it in a book about missionaries when I was small. Did you want to be a missionary in your youth? I did. I think most kids do some time or another, which is odd, seein' how unsatisfactory most of us turn out."

"Meanwhile," said Sir Andrew Mackenzie, "if you run across the man yourself, let us know. I would never deny your extraordinary good fortune, or it may be good judgment, in running across the criminals we may be wanting."

"If I catch the bloke," said Lord Peter, "I'll come and shriek under your windows till you let me in, if it's the middle of the night and you in your little night-shirt. And talking of night-shirts reminds me that we hope to see you down at Denver one of these days, as soon as this business is over. Mother sends kind regards, of course."

"Thanks very much," replied Sir Andrew. "I hope you feel that all is going well. I had Parker in here this morning to report, and he seemed a little dissatisfied."

"He's been doing a lot of ungrateful routine work," said Wimsey, "and being altogether the fine, sound man he always is. He's been a damn good friend to me, Sir

Andrew, and it's a real privilege to be allowed to work with him. Well, so long, Chief."

He found that his interview with Sir Andrew Mackenzie had taken up a couple of hours, and that it was nearly eight o'clock. He was just trying to make up his mind where to dine when he was accosted by a cheerful young woman with bobbed red hair, dressed in a short checked skirt, brilliant jumper, corduroy jacket, and a rakish green velvet tam-o'-shanter.

"Surely," said the young woman, extending a shapely, ungloved hand, "it's Lord Peter Wimsey. How're you? And how's Mary?"

"B'Jove!" said Wimsey gallantly, "it's Miss Tarrant. How perfectly rippin' to see you again. Absolutely delightful. Thanks, Mary ain't as fit as she might be—worryin' about this murder business, y'know. You've heard that we're what the poor so kindly and tactfully call 'in trouble,' I expect, what?"

"Yes, of course," replied Miss Tarrant eagerly, "and, of course, as a good Socialist, I can't help rejoicing rather when a peer gets taken up, because it does make him look so silly, you know, and the House of Lords is silly, isn't it? But, really, I'd rather it was anybody else's brother. Mary and I were such great friends, you know, and, of course, *you* do investigate things, don't you, not just live on your estates in the country and shoot birds? So I suppose that makes a difference."

"That's very kind of you," said Peter. "If you can prevail upon yourself to overlook the misfortune of my birth and my other deficiencies, p'raps you would honour me by comin' along and havin' a bit of dinner somewhere, what?"

"Oh, I'd have *loved* to," cried Miss Tarrant, with enormous energy, "but I've promised to be at the club to-night. There's a meeting at nine. Mr. Coke —the Labour leader, you know—is going to make a speech about converting the Army and Navy to Com-

munism. We expect to be raided, and there's going to be a grand hunt for spies before we begin. But look here, do come along and dine with me there, and, if you like, I'll try to smuggle you in to the meeting, and you'll be seized and turned out. I suppose I oughtn't to have told you anything about it, because you ought to be a deadly enemy, but I can't really believe you're dangerous."

"I'm just an ordinary capitalist, I expect," said Lord Peter, "highly obnoxious."

"Well, come to dinner, anyhow. I *do* so want to hear all the news."

Peter reflected that the dinner at the Soviet Club would be worse than execrable, and was just preparing an excuse when it occurred to him that Miss Tarrant might be able to tell him a good many of the things that he didn't know, and really ought to know, about his own sister. Accordingly, he altered his polite refusal into a polite acceptance, and, plunging after Miss Tarrant, was led at a reckless pace and by a series of grimy short cuts into Gerrard Street, where an orange door, flanked by windows with magenta curtains, sufficiently indicated the Soviet Club.

The Soviet Club, being founded to accommodate free thinking rather than high living, had that curious amateur air which pervades all worldly institutions planned by unworldly people. Exactly why it made Lord Peter instantly think of mission teas he could not say, unless it was that all the members looked as though they cherished a purpose in life, and that the staff seemed rather sketchily trained and strongly in evidence. Wimsey reminded himself that in so democratic an institution one could hardly expect the assistants to assume that air of superiority which marks the servants in a West End club. For one thing, they would not be such capitalists. In the dining-room below the resemblance to a mission tea was increased by the exceedingly heated atmosphere, the babel of conversation, and the curious

nequalities of the cutlery. Miss Tarrant secured seats at a rather crumby table near the serving-hatch, and Peter wedged himself in with some difficulty next to a very large, curly-haired man in a velvet coat, who was earnestly conversing with a thin, eager young woman in a Russian blouse, Venetian beads, a Hungarian shawl and a Spanish comb, looking like a personification of the United Front of the "Internationale."

Lord Peter endeavoured to please his hostess by a question about the great Mr. Coke, but was checked by an agitated "Hush!"

"*Please* don't shout about it," said Miss Tarrant, leaning across till her auburn mop positively tickled his eyebrows. "It's *so* secret."

"I'm awfully sorry," said Wimsey apologetically. "I say, d'you know you're dipping those jolly little beads of yours in the soup?"

"Oh, am I?" cried Miss Tarrant, withdrawing hastily. "Oh, thank you so much. Especially as the colour runs. I hope it isn't arsenic or anything." Then, leaning forward again, she whispered hoarsely:

"The girl next me is Erica Heath-Warburton—the writer, you know."

Wimsey looked with a new respect at the lady in the Russian blouse. Few books were capable of calling up a blush to his cheek, but he remembered that one of Miss Heath-Warburton's had done it. The authoress was just saying impressively to her companion:

"—ever know a sincere emotion to express itself in a subordinate clause?"

"Joyce has freed us from the superstition of syntax," agreed the curly man.

"Scenes which make emotional history," said Miss Heath-Warburton, "should ideally be expressed in a series of animal squeals."

"The D. H. Lawrence formula," said the other.

"Or even Dada," said the authoress.

"We need a new notation," said the curly-haired

man, putting both elbows on the table and knocking Wimsey's bread on to the floor. "Have you heard Robert Snoates recite his own verse to the tom-tom and the penny whistle?"

Lord Peter with difficulty detached his attention from this fascinating discussion to find that Miss Tarrant was saying something about Mary.

"One misses your sister very much" she said. "Her wonderful enthusiasm. She spoke so well at meetings. She had such a *real* sympathy with the worker."

"It seems astonishing to me," said Wimsey, "seeing Mary's never had to do a stroke of work in her life."

"Oh," cried Miss Tarrant, "but she *did* work. She worked for us. Wonderfully! She was secretary to our Propaganda Society for nearly six months. And then she worked so hard for Mr. Goyles. To say nothing of her nursing in the war. Of course, I don't approve of England's attitude in the war, but nobody would say the work wasn't hard."

"Who is Mr. Goyles?"

"Oh, one of our leading speakers—quite young, but the Government are really afraid of him. I expect he'll be here to-night. He has been lecturing in the North, but I believe he's back now."

"I say, do look out," said Peter. "Your beads are in your plate again."

"Are they? Well, perhaps they'll flavour the mutton. I'm afraid the cooking isn't very good here, but the subscription's so small, you see. I wonder Mary never told you about Mr. Goyles. They were so *very* friendly you know, some time ago. Everybody thought she was going to marry him—but it seemed to fall through. And then your sister left town. Do you know about it?"

"That was the fellow, was it? Yes—well, my people didn't altogether see it, you know. Thought Mr. Goyles wasn't quite the son-in-law they'd take to. Family row

l so on. Wasn't there myself ; besides, Mary'd never en to *me*. Still, that's what I gathered."

' Another instance of the absurd, old-fashioned anny of parents," said Miss Tarrant warmly. " You uldn't think it could still be possible—in post-war es."

' I don't know," said Wimsey, " that you could ctly call it that. Not parents exactly. My mother's emarkable woman. I don't think she interfered. t, I fancy she wanted to ask Mr. Goyles to Denver. : my brother put his foot down."

' Oh, well, what can you expect ? " said Miss Tarrant rnfully. " But I don't see what business it was of ."

' Oh, none," agreed Wimsey. " Only, owin' to late father's circumscribed ideas of what was owin' vomen, my brother has the handlin' of Mary's money she marries with his consent. I don't say it's a good n—I think it's a rotten plan. But there it is."

Monstrous ! " said Miss Tarrant, shaking her head angrily that she looked like shock-headed Peter. arbarous ! Simply feudal, you know. But, after what's money ? "

Nothing, of course," said Peter. " But if you've n brought up to havin' it it's a bit awkward to drop ıddenly. Like baths, you know."

I can't understand how it could have made any erence to Mary," persisted Miss Tarrant mournfully. he liked being a worker. We once tried living in a kman's cottage for eight weeks, five of us, on eight- ı shillings a week. It was a *marvellous* experience n the very *edge* of the New Forest."

In the winter ? "

Well, no—we thought we'd better not *begin* with ter. But we had nine wet days, and the kitchen mney smoked all the time. You see, the wood came of the forest, so it was all damp."

I see. It must have been uncommonly interestin'."

" It was an experience I shall *never* forget," said Mi Tarrant. " One felt so *close* to the earth and the prim tive things. If only we could abolish industrialisn I'm afraid, though, we shall never get it put right wit out a ' bloody revolution,' you know. It's very terribl of course, but salutary and inevitable. Shall we ha coffee ? We shall have to carry it upstairs ourselves, you don't mind. The maids don't bring it up aft dinner."

Miss Tarrant settled her bill and returned, thrusti a cup of coffee into his hand. It had already ove flowed into the saucer, and as he groped his way rou a screen and up a steep and twisted staircase it ove flowed quite an amount more.

Emerging from the basement, they almost ran in a young man with fair hair who was hunting for lett in a dark little row of pigeon-holes. Finding nothin he retreated into the lounge. Miss Tarrant utter an exclamation of pleasure.

" Why, there *is* Mr. Goyles," she cried.

Wimsey glanced across, and at the sight of the t slightly stooping figure with the untidy fair hair and t gloved right hand he gave an irrepressible little gasp.

" Won't you introduce me ? " he said.

" I'll fetch him," said Miss Tarrant. She made across the lounge and addressed the young agitat who started, looked across at Wimsey, shook his he appeared to apologise, gave a hurried glance at his wat and darted out by the entrance. Wimsey sprang forw in pursuit.

" Extraordinary," cried Miss Tarrant, with a bl face. " He says he has an appointment—but he c surely be missing the——"

" Excuse me," said Peter. He dashed out, in t to perceive a dark figure retreating across the str He gave chase. The man took to his heels, and seer to plunge into the dark little alley which leads into Charing Cross Road. Hurrying in pursuit, Wim

almost blinded by a sudden flash and smoke nearly
is face. A crashing blow on the left shoulder and a
fening report whirled his surroundings away. He
gered violently, and collapsed on to a second-hand
as bedstead.

CHAPTER VIII

MR. PARKER TAKES NOTES

A man was taken to the Zoo and shown the giraf After gazing at it a little in silence : " I don't believe i he said.

PARKER'S first impulse was to doubt his own sani his next, to doubt Lady Mary's. Then, as the clou rolled away from his brain, he decided that she w merely not speaking the truth.

" Come, Lady Mary," he said encouragingly, b with an accent of reprimand as to an over-imaginati child, " you can't expect us to believe that, you know

" But you must," said the girl gravely ; " it's a fa I shot him. I did, really. I didn't exactly mean to it ; it was a—well, a sort of accident."

Mr. Parker got up and paced about the room.

" You have put me in a terrible position, Lady Mary he said. " You see, I'm a police-officer. I nev imagined——"

" It doesn't matter," said Lady Mary. " Of cou you'll have to arrest me, or detain me, or whatever y call it. That's what I came for. I'm quite ready go quietly—that's the right expression, isn't it ? like to explain about it, though, first. Of course I ou to have done it long ago, but I'm afraid I lost my he I didn't realise that Gerald would get blamed. I hop they'd bring it in suicide. Do I make a statement you now ? Or do I do it at the police-station ? "

Parker groaned.

They won't—they won't punish me so badly if as an accident, will they ?" There was a quiver ıe voice.

No, of course not—of course not. But if only you spoken earlier ! No," said Parker, stopping sud- ly short in his distracted pacing and sitting down de her. " It's impossible—absurd." He caught girl's hand suddenly in his own. " Nothing will vince me," he said. " It's absurd. It's not like ."

But an accident——"

I don't mean that—you know I don't mean that. that you should keep silence——"

I was afraid. I'm telling you now."

No, no, no," cried the detective. " You're lying ne. Nobly, I know ; but it's not worth it. No could be worth it. Let him go, I implore you. the truth. Don't shield this man. If he mur- d Denis Cathcart——"

No ! " The girl sprang to her feet, wrenching hand away. " There was no other man. How you say it or think it ! I killed Denis Cathcart, ll you, and you *shall* believe it. I swear to you there was no other man."

arker pulled himself together.

Sit down, please. Lady Mary, you are determined ake this statement ? "

Yes."

Knowing that I have no choice but to act upon it ? "

If you will not hear it I shall go straight to the e."

arker pulled out his note-book. " Go on," he said. ith no other sign of emotion than a nervous fidget- with her gloves, Lady Mary began her confession in ar, hard voice, as though she were reciting it by t.

On the evening of Wednesday, October 13th, I

went upstairs at half-past nine. I sat up writing letter. At a quarter past ten I heard my brother ar Denis quarrelling in the passage. I heard my broth call Denis a cheat, and tell him that he was never speak to me again. I heard Denis run out. I listen for some time, but did not hear him return. At hal past eleven I became alarmed. I changed my dre and went out to try and find Denis and bring him i I feared he might do something desperate. After sor time I found him in the shrubbery. I begged him come in. He refused, and he told me about my brothe accusation and the quarrel. I was very much horrifie of course. He said where was the good of denyi anything, as Gerald was determined to ruin him, a asked me to go away and marry him and live abroa I said I was surprised that he should suggest such thing in the circumstances. We both became ve angry. I said 'Come in now. To-morrow you c leave by the first train.' He seemed almost crazy. pulled out a pistol and said that he'd come to the end things, that his life was ruined, that we were a lot hypocrites, and that I had never cared for him, o shouldn't have minded what he'd done. Anyway, said, if I wouldn't come with him it was all over, and might as well be hanged for a sheep as a lamb—h shoot me and himself. I think he was quite out of mind. He pulled out a revolver ; I caught his han we struggled ; I got the muzzle right up against chest, and—either I pulled the trigger or it went of itself—I'm not clear which. It was all in such whirl."

She paused. Parker's pen took down the words, a his face showed growing concern. Lady Mary w on :

"He wasn't quite dead. I helped him up. struggled back nearly to the house. He fell once—

"Why," asked Parker, "did you not leave him a run into the house to fetch help ?"

Lady Mary hesitated.

It didn't occur to me. It was a nightmare. I ld only think of getting him along. I think—*I think anted him to die.*"

There was a dreadful pause.

He did die. He died at the door. I went into conservatory and sat down. I sat for hours and d to think. I hated him for being a cheat and a ndrel. I'd been taken in, you see—made a fool by a common sharper. I was glad he was dead. I st have sat there for hours without a coherent thought. wasn't till my brother came along that I realised what done, and that I might be suspected of murdering . I was simply terrified. I made up my mind all in noment that I'd pretend I knew nothing—that heard a shot and come down. You know what I ."

Why, Lady Mary," said Parker, in a perfectly eless voice, " why did you say to your brother ' Good d, Gerald, you've killed him ' ? "

nother hesitant pause.

I never said that. I said, ' Good God, Gerald, killed, then.' I never meant to suggest anything suicide."

You admitted to those words at the inquest ? "

Yes——" Her hands knotted the gloves into all ner of shapes. " By that time I had decided on a glar story, you see."

The telephone bell rang, and Parker went to the rument. A voice came thinly over the wire :

Is that 110 Piccadilly ? This is Charing Cross spital. A man was brought in to-night who says s Lord Peter Wimsey. He was shot in the shoulder, struck his head in falling. He has only just re- ered consciousness. He was brought in at 9.15. he will probably do very well now. Yes, come nd by all means."

Peter has been shot," said Parker. " Will you

come round with me to Charing Cross Hospital ? The say he is in no danger ; still——"

" Oh, quick ! " cried Lady Mary.

Gathering up Mr. Bunter as they hurried throug the hall, detective and self-accused rushed hurried out into Pall Mall, and, picking up a belated taxi Hyde Park Corner, drove madly away through th deserted streets.

CHAPTER IX

GOYLES

—and the moral of that is——" said the Duchess.
—Alice's Adventures in Wonderland.

PARTY of four were assembled next morning at a
y late breakfast, or very early lunch, in Lord Peter's
. Its most cheerful member, despite a throbbing
ulder and a splitting headache, was undoubtedly
'd Peter himself, who lay upon the Chesterfield
rounded with cushions and carousing upon tea and
t. Having been brought home in an ambulance, he
instantly fallen into a healing sleep, and had woken
ine o'clock aggressively clear and active in mind. In
sequence, Mr. Parker had been dispatched in a hurry,
-fed and burdened with the secret memory of last
ıt's disclosures, to Scotland Yard. Here he had set
motion the proper machinery for catching Lord
er's assassin. " Only don't you say anything about
attack on me," said his lordship. " Tell 'em he's to
detained in connection with the Riddlesdale case.
t's good enough for them." It was now eleven, and
Parker had returned, gloomy and hungry, and was
suming a belated omelette and a glass of claret.
ady Mary Wimsey was hunched up in the window-
. Her bobbed golden hair made a little blur of light
ıt her in the pale autumn sunshine. She had made
ttempt to breakfast earlier, and now sat gazing out
Piccadilly. Her first appearance that morning had
ı made in Lord Peter's dressing-gown, but she now

wore a serge skirt and jade-green jumper, which h been brought to town for her by the fourth member the party, now composedly eating a mixed grill a sharing the decanter with Parker.

This was a rather short, rather plump, very bri elderly lady, with bright black eyes like a bird's, a very handsome white hair exquisitely dressed. F from looking as though she had just taken a long nig journey, she was easily the most composed and trim the four. She was, however, annoyed, and said so considerable length. This was the Dowager Duch of Denver.

"It is not so much, Mary, that you went off abruptly last night—just before dinner, too—inco veniencing and alarming us very much—indeed, p Helen was totally unable to eat her dinner, which w extremely distressing to her feelings, because, you kn she always makes such a point of never being up about anything—I really don't know why, for some the greatest men have not minded showing their feelin I don't mean Southerners necessarily, but, as M Chesterton very rightly points out—Nelson, too, w was certainly English if he wasn't Irish or Scotch forget, but United Kingdom, anyway (if that mea anything nowadays with a Free State—such a ridicul title, especially as it always makes one think of Orange Free State, and I'm sure they wouldn't care be mixed up with that, being so very green themselve And going off without even proper clothes, and tak the car, so that I had to wait till the 1.15 from Northall ton—a ridiculous time to start, and such a bad train, t not getting up till 10.30. Besides, if you *must* run to town, why do it in that unfinished manner? If had only looked up the trains before starting you wo have seen you would have half an hour's wait at North lerton, and you could quite easily have packed a It's so much better to do things neatly and thoroughl even stupid things. And it was very stupid of you ind

lash off like that, to embarrass and bore poor Mr. ker with a lot of twaddle—though I suppose it was er you meant to see. You know, Peter, if you will nt low places full of Russians and sucking Socialists ng themselves seriously, you ought to know better ı to encourage them by running after them, however le, and given to drinking coffee and writing poems ı no shape to them, and generally ruining their ves. And, in any case, it makes not the slightest erence ; I could have told Peter all about it myself, e doesn't know already, as he probably does."

ady Mary turned very white at this and glanced arker, who replied rather to her than to the Dowager : No, Lord Peter and I haven't had time to discuss thing yet."

Lest it should ruin my shattered nerves and bring ver to my aching brow," added that nobleman ıbly. " You're a kind, thoughtful soul, Charles, and ɔn't know what I should do without you. I wish rotten old second-hand dealer had been a bit brisker ıt takin' in his stock-in-trade for the night, though. ectly 'straor'nary number of knobs there are on a s bedstead. Saw it comin', y'know, an' couldn't myself. However, what's a mere brass bedstead ? great detective, though at first stunned and dizzy ı his brutal treatment by the fifteen veiled assassins rmed with meat-choppers, soon regained his senses, ks to his sound constitution and healthy manner of

Despite the severe gassing he had endured in the erground room—eh ? A telegram ? Oh, thanks, tter."

ord Peter appeared to read the message with great ırd satisfaction, for his long lips twitched at the ers, and he tucked the slip of paper away in his et-book with a little sigh of satisfaction. He called unter to take away the breakfast-tray and to renew cooling bandage about his brow. This done, Lord r leaned back among his cushions, and with an air

of malicious enjoyment launched at Mr. Parker t inquiry :

" Well, now, how did you and Mary get on last nigh Polly, did you tell him you'd done the murder ? "

Few things are more irritating than to discover, aft you have been at great pains to spare a person so painful intelligence, that he has known it all along a is not nearly so much affected by it as he prope should be. Mr. Parker quite simply and suddenly l his temper. He bounded to his feet, and exclaime without the least reason : " Oh, it's perfectly hopel trying to do anything ! "

Lady Mary sprang from the window-seat.

" Yes, I did," she said. " It's quite true. Your p cious case is finished, Peter."

The Dowager said, without the least discomposur " You must allow your brother to be the best judge his own affairs, my dear."

" As a matter of fact," replied his lordship, rather fancy Polly's right. Hope so, I'm sure. Anyw we've got the fellow, so now we shall know."

Lady Mary gave a sort of gasp, and stepped forw with her chin up and her hands tightly clenched. caught at Parker's heart to see overwhelming catastro so bravely faced. The official side of him was thorou bewildered, but the human part ranged itself instan in support of that gallant defiance.

" Whom have they got ? " he demanded, in a vo quite unlike his own.

" The Goyles person," said Lord Peter careles " Uncommon quick work, what ? But since he'd more original idea than to take the boat-train to Fo stone they didn't have much difficulty."

" It isn't true," said Lady Mary. She stamp " It's a lie. He wasn't there. He's innocent. I ki Denis."

" Fine," thought Parker, " fine ! Damn Goyles, a way, what's he done to deserve it ? "

ord Peter said : " Mary, don't be an ass."

Yes," said the Dowager placidly. " I was going suggest to you, Peter, that this Mr. Goyles—such rrible name, Mary dear, I can't say I ever cared it, even if there had been nothing else against him specially as he would sign himself Geo. Goyles—e. o. you know, Mr. Parker, for George, and I never *ld* help reading it as Gargoyles—I very nearly wrote you, my dear, mentioning Mr. Goyles, and asking ou could see him in town, because there was some-ng, when I came to think of it, about that ipecacuanha iness that made me feel he might have something lo with it."

Yes," said Peter, with a grin, " you always did find a bit sickenin', didn't you ? "

How can you, Wimsey ? " growled Parker reproach-y, with his eyes on Mary's face.

Never mind him," said the girl. " If you can't a gentleman, Peter——"

Damn it all ! " cried the invalid explosively. " Here's llow who, without the slightest provocation, plugs allet into my shoulder, breaks my collar-bone, brings up head foremost on a knobbly second-hand brass stead and vamooses, and when, in what seems to me mild, parliamentary language, I call him a sickenin' r my own sister says I'm no gentleman. Look at ! In my own house, forced to sit here with a per-ly beastly headache, and lap up toast and tea, while people distend and bloat yourselves on mixed grills omelettes and a damn good vintage claret——"

Silly boy," said the Duchess, " don't get so excited. it's time for your medicine. Mr. Parker, kindly h the bell."

Ir. Parker obeyed in silence. Lady Mary came ly across, and stood looking at her brother.

Peter," she said, " what makes you say that *he* it ? "

Did what ? "

"Shot—you?" The words were only a whisp
The entrance of Mr. Bunter at this moment with
cooling draught dissipated the tense atmosphere. L
Peter quaffed his potion, had his pillows re-arrang
submitted to have his temperature taken and his pu
counted, asked if he might not have an egg for
lunch, and lit a cigarette. Mr. Bunter retired, peo
distributed themselves into more comfortable chairs, a
felt happier.

"Now, Polly, old girl," said Peter, "cut out the s
stuff. I accidentally ran into this Goyles chap last ni
at your Soviet Club. I asked that Miss Tarrant to int
duce me, but the minute Goyles heard my name,
made tracks. I rushed out after him, only meanin'
have a word with him, when the idiot stopped at
corner of Newport Court, potted me, and bunk
Silly-ass thing to do. I knew who he was. He coul
help gettin' caught."

"Peter——" said Mary in a ghastly voice.

"Look here, Polly," said Wimsey. "I did think
you. Honest injun, I did. I haven't had the r
arrested. I've made no charge at all—have I, Park
What did you tell 'em to do when you were down
the Yard this morning?"

"To detain Goyles pending inquiries, because
was wanted as a witness in the Riddlesdale case," s
Parker slowly.

"He knows nothing about it," said Mary, dogge
now. "He wasn't anywhere near. He is innocen
that!"

"Do you think so?" said Lord Peter gravely.
you know he is innocent, why tell all these lies to sc
him? It won't do, Mary. You know he was the
and you think he is guilty."

"No!"

"Yes," said Wimsey, grasping her with his so
hand as she shrank away. "Mary, have you thou
what you are doing? You are perjuring yourself

ing Gerald in peril of his life, in order to shield
n justice a man whom you suspect of murdering
r lover and who has most certainly tried to murder
"

Oh," cried Parker, in an agony, " all this interroga-
is horribly irregular."

Never mind him," said Peter. " Do you really
k you're doing the right thing, Mary ? "

he girl looked helplessly at her brother for a minute
vo. Peter cocked up a whimsical, appealing eye from
er his bandages. The defiance melted out of her

.

I'll tell the truth," said Lady Mary.

Good egg," said Peter, extending a hand. " I'm
y. I know you like the fellow, and we appreciate
- decision enormously. Truly, we do. Now, sail
d, old thing, and you take it down, Parker."

Well, it really all started years ago with George.
were at the Front then, Peter, but I suppose they
you about it—and put everything in the worst
ible light."

I wouldn't say that, dear," put in the Duchess. " I
I told Peter that your brother and I were not alto-
er pleased with what we had seen of the young man—
h was not very much, if you remember. He in-
himself down one week-end when the house was
full, and he seemed to make a point of consulting
dy's convenience but his own. And you know,
you even said yourself you thought he was un-
ssarily rude to poor old Lord Mountweazle."

He said what he thought," said Mary. " Of course,
Mountweazle, poor dear, doesn't understand that
present generation is accustomed to discuss things
its elders, not just kow-tow to them. When
ge gave his opinion, he thought he was just con-
cting."

To be sure," said the Dowager, " when you flatly
everything a person says it does sound like con-

tradiction to the uninitiated. But all I remember sayi
to Peter was that Mr. Goyles's manners seemed to
to lack polish, and that he showed a lack of independer
in his opinions."

"A lack of independence?" said Mary, wide-ey

"Well, dear, I thought so. What oft was thoug
and frequently much better expressed, as Pope says
or was it somebody else? But the worse you expr
yourself these days the more profound people think y
—though that's nothing new. Like Browning and th
quaint metaphysical people, when you never kn
whether they really mean their mistress or the Est
lished Church, so bridegroomy and biblical—to
nothing of dear S. Augustine—the Hippo man, I me
not the one who missionised over here, though I da
say he was delightful too, and in those days I supp
they didn't have annual sales of work and tea in
parish room, so it doesn't seem quite like what we m
nowadays by missionaries—he knew all about it—y
remember about that mandrake—or is that the thing
had to get a big black dog for? Manichee, that's
word. What was his name? Was it Faustus? Or
I mixing him up with the old man in the opera?"

"Well, anyway," said Mary, without stopping
disentangle the Duchess's sequence of ideas, "Geo
was the only person I really cared about—he still
Only it did seem so hopeless. Perhaps you didn't
much about him, mother, but Gerald said *lots*—dread
things!"

"Yes," said the Duchess, "he said what he thoug
The present generation does, you know. To the
initiated, I admit, dear, it does sound a little rude."

Peter grinned, but Mary went on unheeding.

"George had simply *no* money. He'd really gi
everything he had to the Labour Party one way
another, and he'd lost his job in the Ministry of Infor
ation: they found he had too much sympathy w
the Socialists abroad. It was awfully unfair. Anyh

.e couldn't be a burden on him ; and Gerald was a ast, and said he'd absolutely stop my allowance if I dn't send George away. So I did, but of course it dn't make a bit of difference to the way we both felt. will say for mother she was a bit more decent. She .d she'd help us if George got a job ; but, as I pointed t, if George got a job we shouldn't *need* helping ! "

" But, my dear, I could hardly insult Mr. Goyles by ggesting that he should live on his mother-in-law," id the Dowager.

" Why not ? " said Mary. " George doesn't believe those old-fashioned ideas about property. Besides, you'd given it to me, it would be *my* money. We be- ve in men and women being equal. Why should e one always be the bread-winner more than the her ? "

" I can't imagine, dear," said the Dowager. " Still, could hardly expect poor Mr. Goyles to live on un- rned increment when he didn't believe in inherited operty."

" That's a fallacy," said Mary, rather vaguely. " Any- w," she added hastily, " that's what happened. Then, er the war, George went to Germany to study Socialism d Labour questions there, and nothing seemed any od. So when Denis Cathcart turned up, I said I'd arry him."

" Why ? " asked Peter. " He never sounded to me bit the kind of bloke for you. I mean, as far as I uld make out, he was Tory and diplomatic and —well, ite crusted old tawny, so to speak, I shouldn't ve thought you had an idea in common."

" No ; but then he didn't care twopence whether I d any ideas or not. I made him promise he wouldn't ther me with diplomats and people, and he said no, could do as I liked, provided I didn't compromise m. And we were to live in Paris and go our own ys and not bother. And anything was better than ying here, and marrying somebody in one's own set,

and opening bazaars and watching polo and meeting the Prince of Wales. So I said I'd marry Denis, because I didn't care about him, and I'm pretty sure he didn't care a halfpenny about me, and we should have left each other alone. I did so want to be left alone!"

"Was Jerry all right about your money?" inquired Peter.

"Oh, yes. He said Denis was no great catch—I do wish Gerald wasn't so vulgar, in that flat, early-Victorian way—but he said that, after George, he could only thank his stars it wasn't worse."

"Make a note of that, Charles," said Wimsey.

"Well, it seemed all right at first, but, as things went on, I got more and more depressed. Do you know, there was something a little alarming about Denis. He was so extraordinarily reserved. I know I wanted to be left alone, but—well, it was uncanny! He was correct. Even when he went off the deep end and was passionate—which didn't often happen—he was correct about it. Extraordinary. Like one of those odd French novels, you know, Peter: frightfully hot stuff, but absolutely impersonal."

"Charles, old man!" said Lord Peter.

"M'm?"

"That's important. You realise the bearing of that?"

"No."

"Never mind. Drive on, Polly."

"Aren't I making your head ache?"

"Damnably; but I like it. Do go on. I'm not sprouting a lily with anguish moist and fever-dew, or anything like that. I'm getting really thrilled. What you've just said is more illuminating than anything I've struck for a week."

"Really!" Mary stared at Peter with every trace of hostility vanished. "I thought you'd never understand that part."

"Lord!" said Peter. "Why not?"

Mary shook her head. "Well, I'd been correspond-
g all the time with George, and suddenly he wrote to
e at the beginning of this month to say he'd come back
om Germany, and had got a job on the *Thunderclap*—
e Socialist weekly, you know— at a beginning screw
£4 a week, and wouldn't I chuck these capitalists and
on, and come and be an honest working woman with
m. He could get me a secretarial job on the paper. I
is to type and so on for him, and help him get his
icles together. And he thought between us we should
ake £6 or £7 a week, which would be heaps to live on.
nd I was getting more frightened of Denis every day.
I said I would. But I knew there'd be an awful row
th Gerald. And really I was rather ashamed—the
gagement had been announced and there'd be a
astly lot of talk and people trying to persuade me.
nd Denis might have made things horribly uncom-
rtable for Gerald—he was rather that sort. So we
cided the best thing to do would be just to run away
d get married first, and escape the wrangling."

"Quite so," said Peter. "Besides, it would look
her well in the paper, wouldn't it? 'PEER'S
AUGHTER WEDS SOCIALIST—ROMANTIC SIDE-CAR
OPEMENT—"£6 A WEEK PLENTY," SAYS HER LADY-
IP.'"

"Pig!" said Lady Mary.

"Very good," said Peter, "I get you! So it was
anged that the romantic Goyles should fetch you
ay from Riddlesdale—why Riddlesdale? It would
twice as easy from London or Denver."

"No. For one thing he had to be up North. And
erybody knows one in town, and—anyhow, we didn't
nt to wait."

"Besides, one would miss the Young Lochinvar
ich. Well, then, why at the unearthly hour of 3
n.?"

"He had a meeting on Wednesday night at Northal-
ton. He was going to come straight on and pick

me up, and run me down to town to be married by special license. We allowed ample time. George had to be at the office next day."

"I see. Well, I'll go on now, and you stop me if I'm wrong. You went up at 9.30 on Wednesday night. You packed a suit-case. You—did you think of writing any sort of letter to comfort your sorrowing friends and relations?"

"Yes, I wrote one. But I——"

"Of course. Then you went to bed, I fancy, or at any rate, turned the clothes back and lay down."

"Yes. I lay down. It was a good thing I did, as it happened——"

"True, you wouldn't have had much time to make the bed look probable in the morning, and we should have heard about it. By the way, Parker, when Mary confessed her sins to you last night, did you make any notes?"

"Yes," said Parker, "if you can read my shorthand."

"Quite so," said Peter. "Well, the rumpled bed disposes of your story about never having gone to bed at all, doesn't it?"

"And I thought it was such a good story!"

"Want of practice," replied her brother kindly. "You'll do better, next time. It's just as well, really, that it's so hard to tell a long, consistent lie. *Did* you, as a matter of fact, hear Gerald go out at 11.30, and Pettigrew-Robinson (damn his ears!) said?"

"I fancy I did hear somebody moving about," said Mary, "but I didn't think much about it."

"Quite right," said Peter, "when I hear people movin' about the house at night, I'm much too delicate-minded to think anything at all."

"Of course," interposed the Duchess, "particularly in England, where it is so oddly improper to think. I will say for Peter that, if he can put a continental interpretation on anything, he will—so considerate of you, dear, as soon as you took to doing it in silence and not

entioning it, as you so intelligently did as a child. ɔu were really a very observant little boy, dear."

" And still is," said Mary, smiling at Peter with sur-ising friendliness.

" Old bad habits die hard," said Wimsey. " To ·oceed. At three o'clock you went down to meet ɔyles. Why did he come all the way up to the house ? would have been safer to meet him in the lane."

" I knew I couldn't get out of the lodge-gate with-t waking Hardraw, and so I'd have to get over the lings somewhere. I might have managed alone, but ɔt with a heavy suit-case. So, as George would have climb over, anyhow, we thought he'd better come and lp carry the suit-case. And then we couldn't miss ch other by the conservatory door. I sent him a little an of the path."

" Was Goyles there when you got downstairs ? "

" No—at least—no, I didn't see him. But there was or Denis's body, and Gerald bending over it. My st idea was that Gerald had killed George. That's ıy I said, ' Oh, God ! you've killed him ! ' " (Peter ınced across at Parker and nodded.) " Then Gerald ·ned him over, and I saw it was Denis—and then I'm re I heard something moving a long way off in the rubbery—a noise like twigs snapping—and it sud-nly came over me, where was George ? Oh, Peter, I v everything then, so clearly. I saw that Denis must ve come on George waiting there, and attacked him—n sure Denis must have attacked him. Probably he ɔught it was a burglar. Or he found out who he was d tried to drive him away. And in the struggle George ıst have shot him. It was awful ! "

Peter patted his sister on the shoulder. " Poor kid," said.

" I didn't know what to do," went on the girl. " I'd awfully little time, you see. My one idea was that body must suspect anybody had been there. So ıad quickly to invent an excuse for being there myself.

I shoved my suit-case behind the cactus-plants to start with. Jerry was taken up with the body and didn't notice—you know, Jerry never *does* notice things till you shove them under his nose. But I knew if there'd been a shot Freddy and the Marchbankses must have heard it. So I pretended I'd heard it too, and rushed down to look for burglars. It was a bit lame, but the best thing I could think of. Gerald sent me up to alarm the house, and I had the story all ready by the time I reached the landing. Oh, and I was quite proud of myself for not forgetting the suit-case ! "

" You dumped it into the chest," said Peter.

" Yes. I had a horrible shock the other morning when I found you looking in."

" Nothing like the shock I had when I found the silver sand there."

" Silver sand ? "

" Out of the conservatory."

" Good gracious ! " said Mary.

" Well, go on. You knocked up Freddy and the Pettigrew-Robinsons. Then you had to bolt into your room to destroy your farewell letter and take your clothes off."

" Yes. I'm afraid I didn't do that very naturally. But I couldn't expect anybody to believe that I went burglar-hunting in a complete set of silk undies and a carefully knotted tie with a gold safety-pin."

" No. I see your difficulty."

" It turned out quite well, too, because they were all quite ready to believe that I wanted to escape from Mrs Pettigrew-Robinson—except Mrs. P. herself, of course."

" Yes ; even Parker swallowed that, didn't you, old man ? "

" Oh, quite, quite so," said Parker gloomily.

" I made a dreadful mistake about that shot," resumed Lady Mary. " You see, I explained it all so elaborately —and then I found that nobody had heard a shot at all. And afterwards they discovered that it had all happened

the shrubbery—and the time wasn't right, either. hen at the inquest I *had* to stick to my story—and it ot to look worse and worse—and then they put the ame on Gerald. In my wildest moments I'd never ought of that. Of course, I see now how my wretched idence helped."

"Hence the ipecacuanha," said Peter.

"I'd got into such a frightful tangle," said poor Lady lary, "I thought I had better shut up altogether for ar of making things still worse."

"And did you still think Goyles had done it?"

"I—I didn't know what to think," said the girl. I don't now. Peter, who else *could* have done it?"

"Honestly, old thing," said his lordship, "if he dn't do it, I don't know who did."

"He ran away, you see," said Lady Mary.

"He seems rather good at shootin' and runnin' way," said Peter grimly.

"If he hadn't done that to you," said Mary slowly, I'd never have told you. I'd have died first. But course, with his revolutionary doctrines—and when u think of red Russia and all the blood spilt in riots d insurrections and things—I suppose it does teach a ntempt for human life."

"My dear," said the Duchess, "it seems to me that r. Goyles shows no especial contempt for his own e. You must try to look at the thing fairly. Shoot- g people and running away is not very heroic— cording to *our* standards."

"The thing I don't understand," struck in Wimsey rriedly, "is how Gerald's revolver got into the rubbery."

"The thing I should like to know about," said the uchess, "is, was Denis really a card-sharper?"

"The thing *I* should like to know about," said Parker, is the green-eyed cat."

"Denis *never* gave me a cat," said Mary. "That as a tarradiddle."

"Were you ever in a jeweller's with him in the Rue de la Paix?"

"Oh, yes; heaps of times. And he gave me a diamond and tortoiseshell comb. But never a cat."

"Then we may disregard the whole of last night's elaborate confession," said Lord Peter, looking through Parker's notes, with a smile. "It's really not bad, Polly not bad at all. You've quite a talent for romantic fiction —no, I mean it! Just here and there you need more attention to detail. For instance, you *couldn't* have dragged that badly wounded man all up the path to the house without getting blood all over your coat, you know. By the way, did Goyles know Cathcart at all?"

"Not to my knowledge."

"Because Parker and I had an alternative theory which would clear Goyles from the worst part of the charge, anyhow. Tell her, old man; it was your idea."

Thus urged, Parker outlined the blackmail and suicide theory.

"That sounds plausible," said Mary—"academically speaking, I mean; but it isn't a bit like George—I mean blackmail is so *beastly*, isn't it?"

"Well," said Peter, "I think the best thing is to go and see Goyles. Whatever the key to Wednesday night's riddle is, he holds it. Parker, old man, we're nearing the end of the chase."

CHAPTER X

NOTHING ABIDES AT THE NOON

" Alas ! " said Hiya, " the sentiments which this person xpressed with irreproachable honourableness, when the un was high in the heavens and the probability of secretly aving an undoubtedly well-appointed home was en- agingly remote, seem to have an entirely different signi- icance when recalled by night in a damp orchard, and on he eve of their fulfilment."—The Wallet of Kai-Lung.

And his short minute, after noon, is night.—Dónne.

Mr. Goyles was interviewed the next day at the olice-station. Mr. Murbles was present, and Mary nsisted on coming. The young man began by bluster- ng a little, but the solicitor's dry manner made its mpression.

" Lord Peter Wimsey identifies you," said Mr. Murbles, " as the man who made a murderous attack pon him last night. With remarkable generosity, he as forborne to press the charge. Now we know further hat you were present at Riddlesdale Lodge on the night hen Captain Cathcart was shot. You will no doubt e called as a witness in the case. But you would greatly ssist justice by making a statement to us now. This is a urely friendly and private interview, Mr. Goyles. As ou see, no representative of the police is present. We imply ask for your help. I ought, however, to warn ou that, whereas it is, of course, fully competent for you o refuse to answer any of our questions, a refusal might ay you open to the gravest imputations."

"In fact," said Goyles, "it's a threat. If I don't tell you, you'll have me arrested on suspicion of murder."

"Dear me, no, Mr. Goyles," returned the solicitor. "We should merely place what information we hold in the hands of the police, who would then act as they thought fit. God bless my soul, no—anything like a threat would be highly irregular. In the matter of the assault upon Lord Peter, his lordship will, of course, use his own discretion."

"Well," said Goyles sullenly, "it's a threat, call it what you like. However, I don't mind speaking—especially as you'll be jolly well disappointed. I suppose you gave me away, Mary."

Mary flushed indignantly.

"My sister has been extraordinarily loyal to you, Mr. Goyles," said Lord Peter. "I may tell you, indeed, that she put herself into a position of grave personal inconvenience—not to say danger—on your behalf. You were traced to London in consequence of your having left unequivocal traces in your exceedingly hasty retreat. When my sister accidentally opened a telegram addressed to me at Riddlesdale by my family name she hurried immediately to town, to shield you if she could, at any cost to herself. Fortunately I had already received a duplicate wire at my flat. Even then I was not certain of your identity when I accidentally ran across you at the Soviet Club. Your own energetic efforts, however, to avoid an interview gave me complete certainty, together with an excellent excuse for detaining you. In fact, I'm uncommonly obliged to you for your assistance."

Mr. Goyles looked resentful.

"I don't know how you could think, George——" said Mary.

"Never mind what I think," said the young man, roughly. "I gather you've told 'em all about it now, anyhow. Well, I'll tell you my story as shortly as I can, and you'll see I know damn all about it. If you

on't believe me I can't help it. I came along at about quarter to three, and parked the 'bus in the lane."

"Where were you at 11.50?"

"On the road from Northallerton. My meeting idn't finish till 10.45. I can bring a hundred witnesses o prove it."

Wimsey made a note of the address where the meeting had been held, and nodded to Goyles to proceed.

"I climbed over the wall and walked through the hrubbery."

"You saw no person, and no body?"

"Nobody, alive or dead."

"Did you notice any blood or footprints on the path?"

"No. I didn't like to use my torch, for fear of being een from the house. There was just light enough to see he path. I came to the door of the conservatory just efore three. As I came up I stumbled over something. felt it, and it was like a body. I was alarmed. I hought it might be Mary—ill or fainted or something. ventured to turn on my light. Then I saw it was athcart, dead."

"You are sure he was dead?"

"Stone dead."

"One moment," interposed the solicitor. "You ay you saw that it was Cathcart. Had you known athcart previously?"

"No, never. I meant that I saw it was a dead man, nd learnt afterwards that it was Cathcart."

"In fact, you do not, now, know of your own knowedge, that it was Cathcart?"

"Yes—at least, I recognised the photographs in the apers afterwards."

"It is very necessary to be accurate in making a tatement, Mr. Goyles. A remark such as you made ust now might give a most unfortunate impression o the police or to a jury."

So saying, Mr. Murbles blew his nose, and resettled is pince-nez.

" What next ? " inquired Peter.

" I fancied I heard somebody coming up the path. I did not think it wise to be found there with the corpse, so I cleared out."

" Oh," said Peter, with an indescribable expression, " that was a very simple solution. You left the girl you were going to marry to make for herself the unpleasant discovery that there was a dead man in the garden and that her gallant wooer had made tracks. What did you expect *her* to think ? "

" Well, I thought she'd keep quiet for her own sake. As a matter of fact, I didn't think very clearly about anything. I knew I'd broken in where I had no business, and that if I was found with a murdered man it might look jolly queer for me."

" In fact," said Mr. Murbles, " you lost your head, young man, and ran away in a very foolish and cowardly manner."

" You needn't put it that way," retorted Mr. Goyles. " I was in a very awkward and stupid situation to start with."

" Yes," said Lord Peter ironically, " and 3 a.m. is a nasty, chilly time of day. Next time you arrange an elopement, make it for six o'clock in the evening, or twelve o'clock at night. You seem better at framing conspiracies than carrying them out. A little thing upsets your nerves, Mr. Goyles. I don't really think, you know, that a person of your temperament should carry fire-arms. What in the world, you blitherin' young ass, made you loose off that pop-gun at me last night ? You *would* have been in a damned awkward situation then, if you'd accidentally hit me in the head or the heart or anywhere that mattered. If you're so frightened of a dead body, why go about shootin' at people ? Why, why, why ? That's what beats me. If you're tellin' the truth now, you never stood in the slightest danger. Lord ! and to think of the time and trouble we've had to waste catchin' you—you ass ! And

oor old Mary, workin' away and half killin' herself, ecause she thought at least you wouldn't have run way unless there was somethin' to run from ! "

" You must make allowance for a nervous tempera- ıent," said Mary in a hard voice.

" If you knew what it felt like to be shadowed and ɔllowed and badgered——" began Mr. Goyles.

" But I thought you Soviet Club people enjoyed eing suspected of things," said Lord Peter. " Why, : ought to be the proudest moment of your life when ou're really looked on as a dangerous fellow."

" It's the sneering of men like you," said Goyles assionately, " that does more to breed hatred between lass and class——"

" Never mind about that," interposed Mr. Murbles. The law's the law for everybody, and you have ıanaged to put yourself in a very awkward position, oung man." He touched a bell on the table, and 'arker entered with a constable. " We shall be obliged ɔ you," said Mr. Murbles, " if you will kindly have this oung man kept under observation. We make no harge against him so long as he behaves himself, but e must not attempt to abscond before the Riddlesdale ase comes up for trial."

" Certainly not, sir," said Mr. Parker.

" One moment," said Mary. " Mr. Goyles, here is ıe ring you gave me. Good-bye. When next you ıake a public speech calling for decisive action I will ome and applaud it. You speak so well about that sort f thing. But otherwise, I think we had better not meet gain."

" Of course," said the young man bitterly, " your eople have forced me into this position, and you turn ound and sneer at me too."

" I didn't mind thinking you were a murderer," aid Lady Mary spitefully, " but I *do* mind your being uch an ass."

Before Mr. Goyles could reply, Mr. Parker, be-

wildered but not wholly displeased, manœuvred his charge out of the room. Mary walked over to the window, and stood biting her lips.

Presently Lord Peter came across to her. "I say, Polly, old Murbles has asked us to lunch. Would you like to come? Sir Impey Biggs will be there."

"I don't want to meet him to-day. It's very kind of Mr. Murbles——"

"Oh, come along, old thing. Biggs is some celebrity, you know, and perfectly toppin' to look at, in a marbly kind of way. He'll tell you all about his canaries——"

Mary giggled through her obstinate tears.

"It's perfectly sweet of you, Peter, to try and amuse the baby. But I can't. I'd make a fool of myself. I've been made enough of a fool of for one day."

"Bosh," said Peter. "Of course, Goyles didn't show up very well this morning, but, then, he was in an awfully difficult position. *Do* come."

"I hope Lady Mary consents to adorn my bachelor establishment," said the solicitor, coming up. "I shall esteem it a very great honour. I really do not think I have entertained a lady in my chambers for twenty years—dear me, twenty years indeed it must be."

"In that case," said Lady Mary, "I simply *can't* refuse."

Mr. Murbles inhabited a delightful old set of rooms in Staple Inn, with windows looking out upon the formal garden, with its odd little flower-beds and tinkling fountain. The chambers kept up to a miracle the old-fashioned law atmosphere which hung about his own prim person. His dining-room was furnished in mahogany, with a Turkey carpet and crimson curtains. On his sideboard stood some pieces of handsome Sheffield plate and a number of decanters with engraved silver labels round their necks. There was a bookcase full of large volumes bound in law calf, and an oil-painting of a harsh-featured judge over the mantelpiece.

Lady Mary felt a sudden gratitude for this discreet and solid Victorianism.

"I fear we may have to wait a few moments for Sir Impey," said Mr. Murbles, consulting his watch. "He is engaged in Quangle & Hamper v. *Truth*, but they expect to be through this morning—in fact, Sir Impey fancied that midday would see the end of it. Brilliant man, Sir Impey. He is defending *Truth*."

"Astonishin' position for a lawyer, what?" said Peter.

"The newspaper," said Mr. Murbles, acknowledging the pleasantry with a slight unbending of the lips, "against these people who profess to cure fifty-nine different diseases with the same pill. Quangle & Hamper produced some of their patients in court to testify to the benefits they'd enjoyed from the cure. To hear Sir Impey handling them was an intellectual treat. His kindly manner goes a long way with old ladies. When he suggested that one of them should show her leg to the Bench the sensation in court was really phenomenal."

"And did she show it?" inquired Lord Peter.

"Panting for the opportunity, my dear Lord Peter, panting for the opportunity."

"I wonder they had the nerve to call her."

"Nerve?" said Mr. Murbles. "The nerve of men like Quangle & Hamper has not its fellow in the universe, to adopt the expression of the great Shakespeare. But Sir Impey is not the man to take liberties with. We are really extremely fortunate to have secured his help.—Ah, I think I hear him!"

A hurried footstep on the stair indeed announced learned counsel, who burst in, still in wig and gown, and full of apology.

"Extremely sorry, Murbles," said Sir Impey. "We became excessively tedious at the end, I regret to say. I really did my best, but dear old Dowson is getting as deaf as a post, you know, and terribly fumbling in his movements.—And how are you, Wimsey? You look

as if you'd been in the wars. Can we bring an action for assault against anybody ? "

" Much better than that," put in Mr. Murbles ; " attempted murder, if you please."

" Excellent, excellent," said Sir Impey.

" Ah, but we've decided not to prosecute," said Mr. Murbles, shaking his head.

" Really ! Oh, my dear Wimsey, this will never do. Lawyers have to live, you know. Your sister ? I hadn't the pleasure of meeting you at Riddlesdale, Lady Mary. I trust you are fully recovered."

" Entirely, thank you," said Mary with emphasis.

" Mr. Parker—of course your name is very familiar. Wimsey, here, can't do a thing without you, I know. Murbles, are these gentlemen full of valuable information ? I am immensely interested in this case."

" Not just this moment, though," put in the solicitor.

" Indeed, no. Nothing but that excellent saddle of mutton has the slightest attraction for me just now. Forgive my greed."

" Well, well," said Mr. Murbles, beaming mildly, " let's make a start. I fear, my dear young people, I am old-fashioned enough not to have adopted the modern practice of cocktail-drinking."

" Quite right too," said Wimsey emphatically. " Ruins the palate and spoils the digestion. Not an English custom—rank sacrilege in this old Inn. Came from America—result, prohibition. That's what happens to people, who don't understand how to drink. God bless me, sir, why, you're giving us the famous claret. It's a sin so much as to mention a cocktail in its presence."

" Yes," said Mr. Murbles, " yes, that's the Lafite '75. It's very seldom, very seldom, I bring it out for anybody under fifty years of age—but you, Lord Peter, have a discrimination which would do honour to one of twice your years."

" Thanks very much, sir ; that's a testimonial I deeply appreciate. May I circulate the bottle, sir ? "

Do, do—we will wait on ourselves, Simpson, thank
After lunch," continued Mr. Murbles, " I will
you to try something really curious. An odd old
it of mine died the other day, and left me a dozen of
port."
Gad ! " said Peter. " '47 ! It'll hardly be drink-
, will it, sir ? "
I very greatly fear," replied Mr. Murbles, " that
ill not. A great pity. But I feel that some kind
omage should be paid to so notable an antiquity."
It would be something to say that one had tasted
said Peter. " Like goin' to see the divine Sarah,
know. Voice gone, bloom gone, savour gone—
still a classic."
Ah," said Mr. Murbles. " I remember her in her
t days. We old fellows have the compensation of
e very wonderful memories."
Quite right, sir," said Peter, " and you'll pile up
ty more yet. But what was this old gentleman
g to let a vintage like that get past its prime ? "
Mr. Featherstone was a very singular man," said
Murbles. " And yet—I don't know. He may have
profoundly wise. He had the reputation for
me avarice. Never bought a new suit, never took a
lay, never married, lived all his life in the same dark,
ow chambers he occupied as a briefless barrister.
he inherited a huge income from his father, all of
h he left to accumulate. The port was laid down
he old man, who died in 1860, when my client
thirty-four. He—the son, I mean—was ninety-six
n he deceased. He said no pleasure ever came up
e anticipation, and so he lived like a hermit—doing
ing, but planning all the things he might have done.
wrote an elaborate diary, containing, day by day, the
d of this visionary existence which he had never
l put to the test of actuality. The diary described
itely a blissful wedded life with the woman of his
ns. Every Christmas and Easter Day a bottle of

the '47 was solemnly set upon his table and solem
removed, unopened, at the close of his frugal me
An earnest Christian, he anticipated great happin
after death, but, as you see, he put the pleasure off
long as possible. He died with the words, " He
faithful that promised '—feeling to the end the need
assurance. A very singular man, very singular indeed
far removed from the adventurous spirit of the pres
generation."

" How curious and pathetic," said Mary.

" Perhaps he had at some time set his heart on sor
thing unattainable," said Parker.

" Well, I don't know," said Mr. Murbles. " Peo
used to say that the dream-lady had not always b
a dream, but that he never could bring himself to p
pose."

" Ah," said Sir Impey briskly, " the more I see
hear in the courts the more I am inclined to feel t
Mr. Featherstone chose the better part."

" And are determined to follow his example—in t
respect at any rate ? Eh, Sir Impey ! " replied
Murbles, with a mild chuckle.

Mr. Parker glanced towards the window. It
beginning to rain.

Truly enough the '47 port was a dead thing ;
merest ghost of its old flame and flavour hung ab
it. Lord Peter held his glass poised a moment.

" It is like the taste of a passion that has pas
its noon and turned to weariness," he said, with sud
gravity. " The only thing to do is to recognise bra
that it is dead, and put it away." With a determi
movement, he flung the remainder of the wine into
fire. The mocking smile came back to his face :

" What I like about Clive
Is that he is no longer alive—
There is a great deal to be said
For being dead.

What classic pith and brevity in those four lines

vever, in the matter of this case, we've a good deal
ell you, sir."
Vith the assistance of Parker, he laid before the
men of law the whole train of the investigation
o date, Lady Mary coming loyally up to the scratch
ı her version of the night's proceedings.
In fact, you see," said Peter, " this Mr. Goyles
lost a lot by *not* being a murderer. We feel he
ld have cut a fine, sinister figure as a midnight
ssin. But things bein' as they are, you see, we
t make what we can of him as a witness, what ? "
Well, Lord Peter," said Mr. Murbles slowly, " I
;ratulate you and Mr. Parker on a great deal of in-
ry and ingenuity in working the matter out."
I think we may say we have made some progress,"
Parker.
If only negatively," added Peter.
Exactly," said Sir Impey turning on him with
;ering abruptness. " Very negatively indeed. And,
ıg seriously hampered the case for the defence,
: are you going to do next ? "
That's a nice thing to say," cried Peter indignantly,
.en we've cleared up such a lot of points for you ! "
I daresay," said the barrister, " but they're the sorts
·ints which are much better left muffled up."
Damn it all, we want to get at the truth ! "
Do you ? " said Sir Impey drily. " I don't. I
: care twopence about the truth. I want a case.
•esn't matter to me who killed Cathcart, provided
ı prove it wasn't Denver. It's really enough if
ı throw reasonable doubt on its being Denver.
's a client comes to me with a story of a quarrel,
picious revolver, a refusal to produce evidence of
atements, and a totally inadequate and idiotic alibi.
ange to obfuscate the jury with mysterious foot-
ɜ, a discrepancy as to time, a young woman with a
:, and a general vague suggestion of something
:en a burglary and a *crime passionel*. And here you

come explaining the footprints, exculpating the unknow man, abolishing the discrepancies, clearing up t motives of the young woman, and most carefully throw ing back suspicion to where it rested in the first plac What *do* you expect ? "

" I've always said," growled Peter, " that the pr fessional advocate was the most immoral fellow on t face of the earth, and now I know for certain."

" Well, well," said Mr. Murbles, " all this just mea that we mustn't rest upon our oars. You must go c my dear boy, and get more evidence of a positive kin If this Mr. Goyles did not kill Cathcart we must able to find the person who did."

" Anyhow," said Biggs, " there's one thing to thankful for—and that is, that you were still too unw to go before the Grand Jury last Thursday, Lady Mar —Lady Mary blushed— " and the prosecution will building their case on a shot fired at three a.m. Do answer any questions if you can help it, and we'll spri it on 'em."

" But will they believe anything she says at the t after that ? " asked Peter dubiously.

" All the better if they don't. She'll be their witne You'll get a nasty heckling, Lady Mary, but y mustn't mind that. It's all in the game. Just stick your story and we'll deliver the goods. See ! " Impey wagged a menacing finger.

" I see," said Mary. " And I'll be heckled like a thing. Just go on stubbornly saying, ' I am telling truth now.' That's the idea, isn't it ? "

" Exactly so," said Biggs. " By the way, Den still refuses to explain his movements, I suppose ? "

" Cat-e-gori-cally," replied the solicitor. " T Wimseys are a very determined family," he add " and I fear that, for the present, it is useless to pur that line of investigation. If we could discover truth in some other way, and confront the Duke w it, he might then be persuaded to add his confirmatio

Well, now," said Parker, " we have, as it seems to still three lines to go upon. First, we must try to blish the Duke's alibi from external sources. ondly, we can examine the evidence afresh with a to finding the real murderer. And thirdly, the s police may give us some light upon Cathcart's history."

And I fancy I know where to go next for informa- on the second point," said Wimsey suddenly. rider's Hole."

Whew-w ! " Parker whistled. " I was forgetting . That's where that bloodthirsty farmer fellow , isn't it, who set the dogs on you ? "

With the remarkable wife. Yes. See here, how this strike you ? This fellow is ferociously jealous is wife, and inclined to suspect every man who es near her. When I went up there that day, and tioned that a friend of mine might have been hang- about there the previous week, he got frightfully ed and threatened to have the fellow's blood. ned to know who I was referrin' to. Now, of se, with my mind full of No. 10—Goyles, you know never thought but what he was the man. But osin' it was Cathcart ? You see, we know now, es hadn't even been in the neighbourhood till the nesday, so you wouldn't expect what's-his-name— ethorpe—to know about him, but Cathcart might wandered over to Grider's Hole any day and been . And look here ! Here's another thing that fits in. n I went up there Mrs. Grimethorpe evidently ok me for somebody she knew, and hurried down arn me off. Well, of course, I've been thinkin' e time she must have seen my old cap and Burberry the window and mistaken me for Goyles, but, now me to think of it, I told the kid who who came to door that I was from Riddlesdale Lodge. If the told her mother, she must have thought it was cart."

"No, no, Wimsey, that won't do," put in Parke
"she must have known Cathcart was dead by that time
"Oh, damn it! Yes, I suppose she must. Unle
that surly old devil kept the news from her. By Jov
that's just what he would do if he'd killed Cathca
himself. He'd never say a word to her—and I do
suppose he would let her look at a paper, even if th
take one in. It's a primitive sort of place."

"But didn't you say Grimethorpe had an alibi?"

"Yes, but we didn't really test it."

"And how d'you suppose he knew Cathcart w
going to be in the thicket that night?"

Peter considered.

"Perhaps he sent for him," suggested Mary.

"That's right, that's right," cried Peter eager
"You remember we thought Cathcart must someh
or other have heard from Goyles, making an appoi
ment—but suppose the message was from Grimethor
threatening to split on Cathcart to Jerry."

"You are suggesting, Lord Peter," said Mr. Murbl
in a tone calculated to chill Peter's blithe impetuosi
"that, at the very time Mr. Cathcart was betroth
to your sister, he was carrying on a disgraceful intrig
with a married woman very much his social inferior."

"I beg your pardon, Polly," said Wimsey.

"It's all right," said Mary, "I—as a matter of fa
it wouldn't surprise me frightfully. Denis was alway
I mean, he had rather Continental ideas about marri
and that sort of thing. I don't think he'd have thou
that mattered very much. He'd probably have s
there was a time and place for everything."

"One of those watertight compartment minds," s
Wimsey thoughtfully. Mr. Parker, despite his l
acquaintance with the seamy side of things in Lond
had his brows set in a gloomy frown of as fierce a p
vincial disapproval as ever came from Barrow-in-Furn

"If you can upset this Grimethorpe's alibi," said
Impey, fitting his right-hand finger-tips neatly betw

ingers of his left hand, " we might make some sort case of it. What do you think, Murbles ? "

After all," said the solicitor, " Grimethorpe and ervant both admit that he, Grimethorpe, was not rider's Hole on Wednesday night. If he can't e he was at Stapley he may have been at Riddles- "

By Jove ! " cried Wimsey ; " driven off alone, ed somewhere, left the gee, sneaked back, met art, done him in, and toddled home next day a tale about machinery."

Or he may even have been to Stapley," put in r ; " left early or gone late, and put in the murder e way. We shall have to check the precise times carefully."

Hurray ! " cried Wimsey. " I think I'll be gettin' to Riddlesdale."

'd better stay here," said Parker. " There may mething from Paris."

ight you are. Let me know the minute anything s through. I say, old thing ! "

Yes ? "

Does it occur to you that what's the matter with ase is that there are too many clues ? Dozens ople with secrets and elopements bargin' about er the place——"

hate you, Peter," said Lady Mary.

CHAPTER XI

MERIBAH

Oh-ho, my friend! You are gotten into Lob's pond.
Jack the Giant-killer.

LORD PETER broke his journey north at York, whith the Duke of Denver had been transferred after t Assizes, owing to the imminent closing-down of North lerton Gaol. By dint of judicious persuasion, Pe contrived to obtain an interview with his brother. found him looking ill at ease, and pulled down by prison atmosphere, but still unquenchably defiant.

"Bad luck, old man," said Peter, "but you're keep your tail up fine. Beastly slow business, all this le stuff, what? But it gives us time, an' that's all to good."

"It's a confounded nuisance," said his grace. "A I'd like to know what Murbles means. Comes do and tries to bully me—damned impudence! Anybod think he suspected me."

"Look here, Jerry," said his brother earnestly, "v can't you let up on that alibi of yours? It'd help end, you know. After all, if a fellow won't say w he's been doin'——"

"It ain't my business to prove anything," reto his grace, with dignity. "They've got to show I there, murderin' the fellow. I'm not bound to where I was. I'm presumed innocent, aren't I, they prove me guilty? I call it a disgrace. Here murder committed, and they aren't taking the sligh trouble to find the real criminal. I give 'em my w

nonour, to say nothin' of an oath, that I didn't kill
hcart—though, mind you, the swine deserved it—
they pay no attention. Meanwhile, the real man's
apin' at his confounded leisure. If I were only free,
make a fuss about it."

Well, why the devil don't you cut it short, then ? "
ed Peter. " I don't mean here and now to me "—
n a glance at the warder, within earshot—" but
Murbles. Then we could get to work."

I wish you'd jolly well keep out of it," grunted the
ke. " Isn't it all damnable enough for Helen, poor
, and mother, and everyone, without you makin' it
opportunity to play Sherlock Holmes ? I'd have
ught you'd have had the decency to keep quiet, for
family's sake. I may be in a damned rotten position,
I ain't makin' a public spectacle of myself, by
e!"

Hell ! " said Lord Peter, with such vehemence that
wooden-faced warder actually jumped. " It's you
:'s makin' the spectacle ! It need never have started,
for you. Do you think *I* like havin' my brother and
er dragged through the Courts, and reporters swarm-
over the place, and paragraphs and news-bills with
r name starin' at me from every corner, and all this
stly business, endin' up in a great show in the House
Lords, with a lot of people togged up in scarlet and
ine, and all the rest of the damn-fool jiggery-pokery?
ple are beginnin' to look oddly at me in the Club, and
an jolly well hear 'em whisperin' that ' Denver's
tude looks jolly fishy, b'gad ! ' Cut it out, Jerry."

Well, we're in for it now," said his brother, " and
nk heaven there are still a few decent fellows left in
peerage who'll know how to take a gentleman's
d, even if my own brother can't see beyond his
en legal evidence."

As they stared angrily at one another, that mysterious
apathy of the flesh which we call family likeness
ang out from its hiding-place, stamping their totally

dissimilar features with an elfish effect of mutual ca
cature. It was as though each saw himself in a distorti
mirror, while the voices might have been one voice wi
its echo.

"Look here, old chap," said Peter, recovering hir
self, "I'm frightfully sorry. I didn't mean to let mys
go like that. If you won't say anything, you won
Anyhow, we're all working like blazes, and we're sure
find the right man before very long."

"You'd better leave it to the police," said Denv
"I know you like playin' at detectives, but I do thi
you might draw the line somewhere."

"That's a nasty one," said Wimsey. "But I do
look on this as a game, and I can't say I'll keep out
it, because I know I'm doin' valuable work. St
I can—honestly, I can—see your point of view. I
jolly sorry you find me such an irritatin' sort of pers
I suppose it's hard for you to believe I feel anythi
But I do, and I'm goin' to get you out of this, if Bun
and I both perish in the attempt. Well, so long—t
warder's just wakin' up to say, 'Time, gentleme
Cheer-oh, old thing! Good luck!"

He rejoined Bunter outside.

"Bunter," he said, as they walked through
streets of the old city, "is my manner *really* offensi
when I don't mean it to be?"

"It is possible, my lord, if your lordship will exc
my saying so, that the liveliness of your lordshi
manner may be misleading to persons of limited——'

"Be careful, Bunter!"

"Limited imagination, my lord."

"Well-bred English people never have imaginati
Bunter."

"Certainly not, my lord. I meant nothing
paraging."

"Well, Bunter—oh, lord! there's a reporter! H
me, quick!"

"In here, my lord."

Mr. Bunter whisked his master into the cool empti-
s of the Cathedral.

I venture to suggest, my lord," he urged in a
ried whisper, " that we adopt the attitude and
ernal appearance of prayer, if your lordship will
use me."

eeping through his fingers, Lord Peter saw a verger
tening towards them, rebuke depicted on his face.
that moment, however, the reporter entered in
dlong pursuit, tugging a note-book from his pocket.
e verger leapt swiftly on this new prey.

The winder h'under which we stand," he began
reverential monotone, " is called the Seven Sisters
York. They say——"

Master and man stole quietly out.

. . . . .

or his visit to the market town of Stapley Lord
er attired himself in an aged Norfolk suit, stockings
h sober tops, an ancient hat turned down all round,
it shoes, and carried a heavy ashplant. It was
n regret that he abandoned his favourite stick—a
dsome malacca, marked off in inches for detective
venience, and concealing a sword in its belly and a
pass in its head. He decided, however, that it
ld prejudice the natives against him, as having a
n-bred, not to say supercilious, air about it. The
el to this commendable devotion to his art forcibly
strated the truth of Gertrude Rhead's observation,
ll this self-sacrifice is a sad mistake."

he little town was sleepy enough as he drove into
n one of the Riddlesdale dog-carts, Bunter beside
, and the under-gardener on the back seat. For
ice, he would have come on a market-day, in the
e of meeting Grimethorpe himself, but things were
ing fast now, and he dared not lose a day. It was
w, cold morning, inclined to rain.

Which is the best inn to put up at, Wilkes ? "

There's t' ' Bricklayers' Arms,' my lord—a fine,

well-thought-of place, or t' ' Bridge and Bottle,' i' t square, or t' ' Rose and Crown,' t'other side o' square.

" Where do the folks usually put up on market-days?

" Mebbe ' Rose and Crown ' is most popular, s to say—Tim Watchett, t' landlord, is a rare gossip Now Greg Smith ower t'way at ' Bridge and Bottle he's nobbut a grimly, surly man, but he keeps goo drink."

" H'm—I fancy, Bunter, our man will be mo attracted by surliness and good drink than by a geni host. The ' Bridge and Bottle ' for us, I fancy, an if we draw blank there, we'll toddle over to the ' Ro and Crown,' and pump the garrulous Watchett."

Accordingly they turned into the yard of a larg stony-faced house, whose long-unpainted sign bore t dim outline of a " Bridge Embattled," which loc etymology had (by a natural association of ideas) tran mogrified into the " Bridge and Bottle." To the grum ostler who took the horse Peter, with his most cor panionable manner, addressed himself :

" Nasty raw morning, isn't it ? "

" Eea."

" Give him a good feed. I may be here some time

" Ugh ! "

" Not many people about to-day, what ? "

" Ugh ! "

" But I expect you're busy enough market-days."

" Eea."

" People come in from a long way round, I suppose

" Co-oop ! " said the ostler. The horse walked th steps forward.

" Wo ! " said the ostler. The horse stopped, w the shafts free of the tugs ; the man lowered the shaf to grate viciously on the gravel.

" Coom on oop ! " said the ostler, and walked calm off into the stable, leaving the affable Lord Peter thoroughly snubbed as that young sprig of the nobil had ever found himself.

I am more and more convinced," said his lordship, at this is Farmer Grimethorpe's usual house of . Let's try the bar. Wilkes, I shan't want you for t. Get yourself lunch if necessary. I don't know long we shall be."

Very good, my lord."

n the bar of the " Bridge and Bottle " they found Greg Smith gloomily checking a long invoice. d Peter ordered drinks for Bunter and himself. landlord appeared to resent this as a liberty, and ed his head towards the barmaid. It was only t and proper that Bunter, after respectfully return- thanks to his master for his half-pint, should fall conversation with the girl, while Lord Peter paid respects to Mr. Smith.

Ah ! " said his lordship, " good stuff, that, Mr. th. I was told to come here for real good beer, and, ove ! I've been sent to the right place."

Ugh ! " said Mr. Smith, " 'tisn't what it was. Nowt's d these times."

Well, I don't want better. By the way, is Mr. nethorpe here to-day ? "

Eh ? "

Is Mr. Grimethorpe in Stapley this morning, d'you w ? "

How'd I know ? "

I thought he always put up here."

Ah ! "

Perhaps I mistook the name. But I fancied he'd ne man to go where the best beer is."

Ay ? "

Oh, well, if you haven't seen him, I don't suppose come over to-day."

Coom where ? "

Into Stapley."

Doosn't 'e live here ? He can go and coom without knowing."

Oh, of course ! " Wimsey staggered under the

shock, and then grasped the misunderstanding. "
don't mean Mr. Grimethorpe of Stapley, but M
Grimethorpe of Grider's Hole."

"Why didn't tha say so? Oh, him? Ay."

"He's here to-day?"

"Nay, I knaw nowt about 'un."

"He comes in on market-days, I expect."

"Sometimes."

"It's a longish way. One can put up for the nigh
I suppose?"

"Doosta want t'stay t'night?"

"Well, no, I don't think so. I was thinking abo
my friend Mr. Grimethorpe. I daresay he often h
to stay the night."

"Happen a does."

"Doesn't he stay here, then?"

"Naay."

"Oh!" said Wimsey, and thought impatient
"If all these natives are as oyster-like I *shall* have
stay the night. . . . Well, well," he added aloud, "ne
time he drops in say I asked after him."

"And who mought tha be?" inquired Mr. Smith in
hostile manner.

"Oh, only Brooks of Sheffield," said Lord Pet
with a happy grin. "Good morning. I won't forg
to recommend your beer."

Mr. Smith grunted. Lord Peter strolled slowly o
and before long Mr. Bunter joined him, coming c
with a brisk step and the lingering remains of what,
anyone else, might have been taken for a smirk.

"Well?" inquired his lordship. "I hope the you
lady was more communicative than that fellow."

"I found the young person" ("Snubbed again
muttered Lord Peter) "perfectly amiable, my lo
but unhappily ill-informed. Mr. Grimethorpe is
unknown to her, but he does not stay here. She
sometimes seen him in company with a man cal
Zedekiah Bone."

Well," said his lordship, " suppose you look for e, and come and report progress to me in a couple ours' time. I'll try the ' Rose and Crown.' We'll t at noon under that thing."

That thing," was a tall erection in pink granite, ly tooled to represent a craggy rock, and guarded two petrified infantry-men in trench helmets. A stream of water gushed from a bronze knob half-way a roll of honour was engraved on the octagonal base, four gas-lamps on cast-iron standards put the finish-touch to a very monument of incongruity. Mr. ter looked carefully at it, to be sure of recognising it n, and moved respectfully away. Lord Peter walked brisk steps in the direction of the " Rose and Crown," a thought struck him.

Bunter ! "

Ir. Bunter hurried back to his side.

Oh, nothing ! " said his lordship. " Only I've thought of a name for it."

For——"

That memorial," said Lord Peter. " I choose to it ' Meribah.' "

Yes, my lord. The waters of strife. Exceedingly my lord. Nothing harmonious about it, if I may so. Will there be anything further, my lord ? "

No, that's all."

. . . . .

Ir. Timothy Watchett of the " Rose and Crown " certainly a contrast to Mr. Greg Smith. He was a l, spare, sharp-eyed man of about fifty-five, with winkling and humorous an eye and so alert a cock ae head that Lord Peter summed up his origin the nent he set eyes on him.

Morning, landlord," said he genially, " and when *you* last see Piccadilly Circus ? "

'Ard to say, sir. Gettin' on for thirty-five year, I

reckon. Many's the time I said to my wife, 'Liz, I' tike you ter see the 'Olborn Empire afore I die.' Bu with one thing and another, time slips aw'y. One day so like another—blowed if I ever remember 'ow o I'm gettin', sir."

"Oh, well, you've lots of time yet," said Lo Peter.

"I 'ope so, sir. I ain't never wot you may call g used ter these Northerners. That slow, they are, sir- it fair giv' me the 'ump when I first come. And t w'y they speak—that took some gettin' used to. C that English, I useter say, give me the Frenchies in t Chantycleer Restaurong, I ses. But there, sir, custon everything. Blowed if I didn't ketch myself a-sy 'yon side the square' the other day. Me!"

"I don't think there's much fear of your turni into a Yorkshire man," said Lord Peter, "didn't know you the minute I set eyes on you? In M Watchett's bar I said to myself, 'My foot is on my nati paving-stones.'"

"That's raight, sir. And, bein' there, sir, what c I 'ave the pleasure of offerin' you? . . . Excuse n sir, but 'aven't I seen your fice somewhere?"

"I don't think so," said Peter; "but that remin me. Do you know one, Mr. Grimethorpe?"

"I know five Mr. Grimethorpes. W'ich of 'em w you meanin', sir?"

"Mr. Grimethorpe of Grider's Hole."

The landlord's cheerful face darkened.

"Friend of yours, sir?"

"Not exactly. An acquaintance."

"There naow!" cried Mr. Watchett, smacking hand down upon the counter. "I knowed as I know your fice! Don't you live over at Riddlesdale, sir?"

"I'm stayin' there."

"I knowed it," retorted Mr. Watchett triumphan He dived behind the counter and brought up a bun of newspapers, turning over the sheets excitedly w

well-licked thumb. "There! Riddlesdale! That's of course."

He smacked open a *Daily Mirror* of a fortnight or so o. The front page bore a heavy block headline: HE RIDDLESDALE MYSTERY. And beneath was a lifelike apshot entitled, "*Lord Peter Wimsey, the Sherlock olmes of the West End, who is devoting all his time and ergies to proving the innocence of his brother, the Duke Denver.*" Mr. Watchett gloated.

"'You won't mind my syin' 'ow proud I am to 'ave u in my bar, my lord.—'Ere, Jem, you attend ter em gentlemen; don't you see they're wytin'?—llered all yer caises I 'ave, my lord, in the pipers—t like a book they are. An' ter think——"

"Look here, old thing," said Lord Peter, "d'you nd not talkin' quite so loud. Seein' dear old Felix out of the bag, so to speak, do you think you could 'e me some information and keep your mouth shut, iat?"

"Come be'ind into the bar-parlour, my lord. Nody'll 'ear us there," said Mr. Watchett eagerly, lifting the flap. "Jem, 'ere! Bring a bottle of—what'll u 'ave, my lord?"

'Well, I don't know how many places I may have visit," said his lordship dubiously.

'Jem, bring a quart of the old ale.—It's special, it's wot it is, my lord. I ain't never found none like except it might be once at Oxford. Thanks, Jem. ow you get along sharp and attend to the customers. w, my lord."

Mr. Watchett's information amounted to this. That . Grimethorpe used to come to the "Rose and own" pretty often, especially on market-days. About days previously he had come in lateish, very drunk l quarrelsome, with his wife, who seemed, as usual, rified of him. Grimethorpe had demanded spirits, t Mr. Watchett had refused to serve him. There had en a row, and Mrs. Grimethorpe had endeavoured to

get her husband away. Grimethorpe had promptly knocked her down, with epithets reflecting upon her virtue, and Mr. Watchett had at once called upon the potmen to turn Grimethorpe out, refusing to have him in the house again. He had heard it said on all sides that Grimethorpe's temper, always notoriously bad, had become positively diabolical of late.

"Could you hazard, so to speak, a calculation as to how long, or since when?"

"Well, my lord, come to think of it, especially since the middle of last month—p'r'aps a bit earlier."

"M'm!"

"Not that I'd go for to insinuate anythink, nor your lordship, neither, of course," said Mr. Watchett quickly.

"Certainly not," said Lord Peter. "What about?"

"Ah!" said Mr. Watchett, "there it is, wot abaht?"

"Tell me," said Lord Peter, "do you recollect Grimethorpe comin' into Stapley on October 13th—a Wednesday, it was."

"That would be the day of the—ah! to be sure. Yes, I do recollect it, for I remember thinking it was odd him comin' here except on a market-day. Said he 'ad ter look at some machinery—drills and such, that raight. 'E was 'ere raight enough."

"Do you remember what time he came in?"

"Well, naow, I've a fancy 'e was 'ere ter lunch. The waitress'd know. 'Ere, Bet!" he called through the side door, "d'yer 'appen to recollect whether Mr. Grimethorpe lunched 'ere October the 13th—Wednesday it were, the d'y the pore gent was murdered over at Riddlesdale?"

"Grimethorpe o' Grider's Hole?" said the girl, a well-grown young Yorkshire woman. "Yes! 'E took a loonch, and coom back to sleep. Ah'm not mistook, for ah waited on 'un, an' took up 'is watter i' t'morning, and 'e only gied me tuppence."

"Monstrous!" said Lord Peter. "Look here, Miss Elizabeth, you're sure it was the thirteenth? Because

e got a bet on it with a friend, and I don't want to e the money if I can help it. You're positive it was ednesday night he slept here? I could have sworn was Thursday."

'Naay, sir, t'wor Wednesday for I remember hear- the men talking o' t'murder i' t'bar, an' telling ester Grimethorpe next daay."

'Sounds conclusive. What did Mr. Grimethorpe about it?"

'There now," cried the young woman, "'tis queer should ask that; everyone noticed how strange acted. He turned all white like a sheet, and looked both his hands, one after the other, and then he shes 'es hair off 's forehead—dazed-like. We reckoned hadn't got over the drink. He's more often drunk n not. Ah wouldn't be his wife for five hundred unds."

'I should think not," said Peter; "you can do a lot ter than that. Well, I suppose I've lost my money, n. By the way, what time did Mr. Grimethorpe me in to bed?"

'Close on two i' t'morning," said the girl, tossing her ad. "He were locked oot, an' Jem had to go down l let 'un in."

'That so?" said Peter. "Well, I might try to out on a technicality, eh, Mr. Watchett? Two lock is Thursday, isn't it? I'll work that for all worth. Thanks frightfully. That's all I want to ow."

Bet grinned and giggled herself away, comparing the nerosity of the strange gentleman with the stinginess Mr. Grimethorpe. Peter rose.

'I'm no end obliged, Mr. Watchett," he said. "I'll t have a word with Jem. Don't say anything, by e way."

'Not me," said Mr. Watchett; "I knows wot's wot. ood luck, my lord."

Jem corroborated Bet. Grimethorpe had returned

at about 1.50 a.m. on October 14th, drunk, and plas tered with mud. He had muttered something abou having run up against a man called Watson.

The ostler was next interrogated. He did not thin that anybody could get a horse and trap out of th stable at night without his knowing it. He knev Watson. He was a carrier by trade, and lived in Windo Street. Lord Peter rewarded his informant suitably and set out for Windon Street.

But the recital of his quest would be tedious. At quarter-past noon he joined Bunter at the Meriba memorial.

" Any luck ? "

" I have secured certain information, my lord, whic I have duly noted. Total expenditure on beer for se and witnesses *7s. 2d.*, my lord."

Lord Peter paid the *7s. 2d.* without a word, and the adjourned to the " Rose and Crown." Being accomm dated in a private parlour, and having ordered lunch they proceeded to draw up the following schedule :

GRIMETHORPE'S MOVEMENTS. *Wednesday, October 13th* to *Thur day, October 14th.*

October 13th :

12.30	p.m.	Arrives " Rose and Crown."
1.0	p.m.	Lunches.
3.0	p.m.	Orders two drills from man called Gooch Trimmer's Lane.
4.30	p.m.	Drink with Gooch to clinch bargain.
5.0	p.m.	Calls at house of John Watson carrier, abo delivering some dog-food. Watson abser Mrs. Watson says W. expected back that nigh G. says will call again.
5.30	p.m.	Calls on Mark Dolby, grocer, to complain abo some tinned salmon.
5.45	p.m.	Calls on Mr. Hewitt, optician, to pay bill f spectacles and dispute the amount.
6.0	p.m.	Drinks with Zedekiah Bone at " Bridge a Bottle."
6.45	p.m.	Calls again on Mrs. Watson. Watson not y home.
7.0	p.....	Seen by Constable Z15 drinking with seve men at " Pig and Whistle." Heard to u threatening language with regard to son person unknown.

7.20 p.m.	Seen to leave " Pig and Whistle " with two men (not yet identified).

ober 14th :

1.15 a.m.	Picked up by Watson, carrier, about a mile out on road to Riddlesdale, very dirty and ill-tempered, and not quite sober.
1.45 a.m.	Let into " Rose and Crown " by James Johnson, potman.
9.0 a.m.	Called by Elizabeth Dobbin.
9.30 a.m.	In Bar of " Rose and Crown." Hears of man murdered at Riddlesdale. Behaves suspiciously.
10.15 a.m.	Cashes cheque £129 17*s.* 8*d.* at Lloyds Bank.
10.30 a.m.	Pays Gooch for drills.
11.5 a.m.	Leaves " Rose and Crown " for Grider's Hole.

Lord Peter looked at this for a few minutes, and put finger on the great gap of six hours after 7.20.

' How far to Riddlesdale, Bunter ? "

' About thirteen and three-quarter miles, my lord."

' And the shot was heard at 10.55. It couldn't be ne on foot. Did Watson explain why he didn't get :k from his round till two in the morning ? "

' Yes, my lord. He says he reckons to be back out eleven, but his horse cast a shoe between King's nton and Riddlesdale. He had to walk him quietly o Riddlesdale—about $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles—getting there about 1, and knock up the blacksmith. He turned in to e ' Lord in Glory ' till closing time, and then went me with a friend and had a few more. At 12.40 he rted off home, and picked Grimethorpe up a mile so out, near the cross roads."

' Sounds circumstantial. The blacksmith and the end ought to be able to substantiate it. But we nply must find those men at the ' Pig and Whistle.' "

" Yes, my lord. I will try again after lunch."

It was a good lunch. But that seemed to exhaust eir luck for the day, for by three o'clock the men had t been identified, and the scent seemed cold.

Wilkes, the groom, however, had his own contribun to the inquiry. He had met a man from King's nton at lunch, and they had, naturally, got to talking er the mysterious murder at the Lodge, and the man

had said that he knew an old man living in a hut o the Fell, who said that on the night of the murde he'd seen a man walking over Whemmeling Fell i the middle of the night. "And it coom to me, all o a sooden, it mought be his grace," said Wilkes brightly

Further inquiries elicited that the old man's nam was Groot, and that Wilkes could easily drop Lor Peter and Bunter at the beginning of the sheep-pat which led up to his hut.

Now, had Lord Peter taken his brother's advice and paid more attention to English country sport than to incunabula and criminals in London—or ha Bunter been brought up on the moors, rather than i a Kentish village—or had Wilkes (who was a Yorkshir man bred and born, and ought to have known better not been so outrageously puffed up with the sense o his own importance in suggesting a clue, and wit impatience to have that clue followed up without delay— or had any one of the three exercised common sense— this preposterous suggestion would never have bee made, much less carried out, on a November day in th North Riding. As it was, however, Lord Peter an Bunter left the trap at the foot of the moor-path a ten minutes to four, and, dismissing Wilkes, climbe steadily up to the wee hut on the edge of the fell.

. . . . .

The old man was extremely deaf, and, after half a hour of interrogation, his story did not amount t much. On a night in October, which he though might be the night of the murder, he had been sittin by his peat fire when—about midnight, as he guessed— a tall man had loomed up out of the darkness. H spoke like a Southerner, and said he had got lost o the moor. Old Groot had come to his door and pointe out the track down towards Riddlesdale. The strang had then vanished, leaving a shilling in his hand. H could not describe the stranger's dress more particular than that he wore a soft hat and an overcoat, an

thought, leggings. He was pretty near sure it was night of the murder, because afterwards he had ned it over in his mind and made out that it might ve been one of yon folk at the Lodge—possibly the ke. He had only arrived at this result by a slow ocess of thought, and had not " come forward," not owing whom or where to come to.

With this the inquirers had to be content, and, esenting Groot with half a crown, they emerged upon moor at something after five o'clock.

' Bunter," said Lord Peter through the dusk, " I abso-bally-lutely positive that the answer to all this siness is at Grider's Hole."

' Very possibly, my lord."

Lord Peter extended his finger in a south-easterly ection. " That is Grider's Hole," he said. " Let's "

' Very good, my lord."

So, like two Cockney innocents, Lord Peter and nter set forth at a brisk pace down the narrow oor-track towards Grider's Hole, with never a glance hind them for the great white menace rolling silently wn through the November dusk from the wide lone- ess of Whemmeling Fell.

. . . . .

' Bunter ! "

' Here, my lord ! "

The voice was close at his ear.

' Thank God ! I thought you'd disappeared for od. I say, we ought to have known."

' Yes, my lord."

It had come on them from behind, in a single stride, ck, cold, choking—blotting each from the other, ough they were only a yard or two apart.

' I'm a fool, Bunter," said Lord Peter.

' Not at all, my lord."

' Don't move ; go on speaking."

' Yes, my lord."

Peter groped to the right and clutched the other's sleeve.

"Ah! Now what are we to do?"

"I couldn't say, my lord, having no experience Has the—er—phenomenon any habits, my lord?"

"No regular habits, I believe. Sometimes it moves Other times it stays in one place for days. We ca wait all night, and see if it lifts at daybreak."

"Yes, my lord. It is unhappily somewhat damp."

"Somewhat—as you say," agreed his lordship, wit a short laugh.

Bunter sneezed, and begged pardon politely.

"If we go on going south-east," said his lordship "we shall get to Grider's Hole all right, and they' jolly well *have* to put us up for the night—or give us a escort. I've got my torch in my pocket, and we ca go by compass—oh, hell!"

"My lord?"

"I've got the wrong stick. This beastly ash! N compass, Bunter—we're done in."

"Couldn't we keep on going downhill, my lord?"

Lord Peter hesitated. Recollections of what he ha heard and read surged up in his mind to tell him tha uphill or downhill seems much the same thing in fog. But man walks in a vain shadow. It is hard t believe that one is really helpless. The cold was icy "We might try," he said weakly.

"I have heard it said, my lord, that in a fog on always walked round in a circle," said Mr. Bunte seized with a tardy diffidence.

"Not on a slope, surely," said Lord Peter, beginnin to feel bold out of sheer contrariness.

Bunter, being out of his element, had, for once, n good counsel to offer.

"Well, we can't be much worse off than we are, said Lord Peter. "We'll try it, and keep on shouting.

He grasped Bunter's hand, and they strode gingerl forward into the thick coldness of the fog.

How long that nightmare lasted neither could have
d. The world might have died about them. Their
n shouts terrified them ; when they stopped shouting
e dead silence was more terrifying still. They
umbled over tufts of thick heather. It was amazing
w, deprived of sight, they exaggerated the inequalities
the ground. It was with very little confidence that
ey could distinguish uphill from downhill. They were
rammed through with cold, yet the sweat was running
m their faces with strain and terror.

Suddenly—from directly before them as it seemed,
d only a few yards away—there rose a long, horrible
riek—and another—and another.

" My God ! What's that ? "

" It's a horse, my lord."

" Of course." They remembered having heard horses
eam like that. There had been a burning stable near
periughe——

" Poor devil," said Peter. He started off impulsively
the direction of the sound, dropping Bunter's hand.

' Come back, my lord," cried the man in a sudden
ny. And then, with a frightened burst of enlighten-
nt :

' For God's sake stop, my lord—the bog ! "

A sharp shout in the utter blackness.

' Keep away there—don't move—it's got me ! "

And a dreadful sucking noise.

CHAPTER XII

THE ALIBI

When actually in the embrace of a voracious and powerful wild animal, the desirability of leaving a limb is not a matter to be subjected to lengthy consideration.—The Wallet of Kai-Lung.

"I TRIPPED right into it," said Wimsey's voice steadily out of the blackness. "One sinks very fast. You'd better not come near, or you'll go too. We'll yell a bit. I don't think we can be very far from Grider's Hole."

"If your lordship will keep shouting," returned Mr. Bunter, "I think—I can—get to you," he panted, ur tying with his teeth the hard knot of a coil of string.

"Oy!" cried Lord Peter obediently. "Help Oy! Oy!"

Mr. Bunter groped towards the voice, feeling cautiously before him with his walking-stick.

"Wish you'd keep away, Bunter," said Lord Pete peevishly. "Where's the sense of both of us——? He squelched and floundered again.

"Don't do that, my lord," cried the man entreatingly. "You'll sink farther in."

"I'm up to my thighs now," said Lord Peter.

"I'm coming," said Bunter. "Go on shoutin Ah, here's where it gets soggy."

He felt the ground carefully, selected a tussocky b which seemed reasonably firm, and drove his stick we into it.

"Oy! Hi! Help!" said Lord Peter, shoutin lustily.

Mr. Bunter tied one end of the string to the walking-
ck, belted his Burberry tightly about him, and, laying
mself cautiously down upon his belly, advanced, clue
hand, like a very Gothic Theseus of a late and
generate school.

The bog heaved horribly as he crawled over it, and
my water squelched up into his face. He felt with
s hands for tussocks of grass, and got support from
em when he could.

"Call out again, my lord!"

"Here!" The voice was fainter and came from
e right. Bunter had lost his line a little, hunting for
ssocks. "I daren't come faster," he explained. He
lt as though he had been crawling for years.

"Get out while there's time," said Peter. "I'm
) to my waist. Lord! this is rather a beastly way
peg out."

"You won't peg out," grunted Bunter. His voice
as suddenly quite close. "Your hands now."

For a few agonising minutes two pairs of hands
oped over the invisible slime. Then:

"Keep yours still," said Bunter. He made a slow,
-cling movement. It was hard work keeping his face
t of the mud. His hands slithered over the slobbery
rface—and suddenly closed on an arm.

"Thank God!" said Bunter. "Hang on here,
ıy lord."

He felt forward. The arms were perilously close
the sucking mud. The hands crawled clingingly
his arms and rested on his shoulders. He grasped
imsey beneath the armpits and heaved. The exertion
ove his own knees deep into the bog. He straightened
mself hurriedly. Without using his knees he could
t no purchase, but to use them meant certain death.
ıey could only hang on desperately till help came—or
l the strain became too great. He could not even
out; it was almost more than he could do to keep
s mouth free of water. The dragging strain on his

shoulders was intolerable ; the mere effort to breathe meant an agonising crick in the neck.

" You must go on shouting, my lord."

Wimsey shouted. His voice was breaking and fading.

" Bunter, old thing," said Lord Peter, " I'm simply beastly sorry to have let you in for this."

" Don't mention it, my lord," said Bunter, with his mouth in the slime. A thought struck him.

" What became of your stick, my lord ? "

" I dropped it. It should be somewhere near, if it hasn't sunk in."

Bunter cautiously released his left hand and felt about.

" Hi ! Hi ! Help ! "

Bunter's hand closed over the stick, which, by a happy accident, had fallen across a stable tuft of grass. He pulled it over to him, and laid it across his arms, so that he could just rest his chin upon it. The relief to his neck was momentarily so enormous that his courage was renewed. He felt he could hang on for ever.

" Help ! "

. . . . . .

Minutes passed like hours.

. . . . .

" See that ? "

A faint, flickering gleam somewhere away to the right. With desperate energy both shouted together.

" Help ! Help ! Oy ! Oy ! Help ! "

An answering yell. The light swayed—came nearer—a spreading blur in the fog.

" We *must* keep it up," panted Wimsey. They yelled again.

" Where be ? "

" Here ! "

" Hello ! " A pause. Then :

" Here be stick," said a voice, suddenly near.

" Follow the string ! " yelled Bunter. They heard

o voices, apparently arguing. Then the string was itched.

" Here ! Here ! Two of us ! Make haste ! "

More consultation.

" Hang on, canst a ? "

" Yes, if you're quick."

" Fetchin' hurdle. Two on 'ee, sayst a ? "

" Yes."

" Deep in ? "

" One of us."

" Aw reet. Jem's comin'."

A splattering noise marked the arrival of Jem with nurdle. Then came an endless wait. Then another rdle, the string twitching, and the blur of the lantern bbing violently about. Then a third hurdle was flung wn, and the light came suddenly out of the mist. A nd caught Bunter by the ankle.

" Where's t'other ? "

" Here—nearly up to his neck. Have you a rope ? "

" Aye, sure. Jem ! T'rope ! "

The rope came snaking out of the fog. Bunter asped it, and passed it round his master's body.

" Now—coom tha back and heave."

Bunter crawled cautiously backwards upon the rdle. All three set hands upon the rope. It was e trying to heave the earth out of her course.

' 'Fraid I'm rooted to Australia," panted Peter ologetically. Bunter sweated and sobbed.

' It's aw reet—he's coomin' ! "

With slow heavings the rope began to come towards em. Their muscles cracked.

Suddenly, with a great *plop !* the bog let go its hold. ie three at the rope were hurled head over heels on the hurdles. Something unrecognisable in slime flat, heaving helplessly. They dragged at him in a id of frenzy, as though he might be snatched back m them again. The evil bog stench rose thickly und them. They crossed the first hurdle—the second

—the third—and rose staggeringly to their feet on firm ground.

"What a beastly place," said Lord Peter faintly "'Pologise, stupid of me to have forgotten—what's sy name?"

"Well, tha's loocky," said one of their rescuers "We thowt we heerd someun a-shouting. There be few folks as cooms oot o' Peter's Pot dead or alive, reckon."

"Well, it was nearly potted Peter that time," said his lordship, and fainted.

. . . . .

To Lord Peter the memory of his entry that nigh into the farmhouse at Grider's Hole always brough with it a sensation of nightmare. The coils of fo rolled in with them as the door opened, and throug them the firelight leapt steamily. A hanging lamp mad a blur. The Medusa-head of Mrs. Grimethorpe, terribl white against her black hair, peered over him. A hair paw caught her by the shoulder and wrenched her aside

"Shameless! A mon—ony mon—that's a' th thinks on. Bide till tha's wanted. What's this?"

Voices—voices—ever so many fierce faces peerin down all round.

"Peter's Pot? An' what were 'ee a-wanting o t'moor this time night? No good. Nobbody but fool or a thief 'ud coom oop 'ere i' t'fog."

One of the men, a farm labourer with wry shoulder and a thin, malicious face, suddenly burst into tuneles song:

"I been a-courtin' Mary Jane
On Ilkla' Moor bar t'at."

"Howd toong!" yelled Grimethorpe, in a fur "Doost want Ah should break ivery bwoan i' t body?" He turned on Bunter. "Tak thesen of Ah tell tha. Tha'rt here for no good."

'But, William——" began his wife. He snapped ınd at her like a dog, and she shrank back.

'Naay now, naay now," said a man, whom Wimsey nly recognised as the fellow who had befriended him his previous visit, "tha mun' taak them in for t' ht, racken, or there'll be trouble wi' t' folk down ıder at t' Lodge, lat aloan what police 'ull saay. Ef ellow 'm coom to do harm, 'ee's doon it already—to self. Woan't do no more to-night—look at 'un. ng 'un to fire, mon," he added to Bunter, and then, ning to the farmer again, "'Tes tha'll be in Queer eet ef 'e wor to goo an' die on us wi' noomony or omaticks."

This reasoning seemed partly to convince Grimeorpe. He made way, grumbling, and the two chilled l exhausted men were brought near the fire. Somely brought two large, steaming tumblers of spirits. msey's brain seemed to clear, then swim again owsily, drunkenly.

. . . . .

Presently he became aware that he was being carried stairs and put to bed. A big, old-fashioned room, h a fire on the hearth and a huge, grim four-poster. nter was helping him out of soaked clothes ; rubbing n. Another man appeared from time to time to p him. From below came the bellowing sound of imethorpe's voice, blasphemously uplifted. Then the sh, brassy singing of the wry-shouldered man :

> "Then woorms will coom an' ate thee oop
> On Ilkla' Moor bar t'at . . . .
>
> Then doocks will coom an' ate oop woorms
> On Ilkla' Moor . . . ."

Lord Peter rolled into bed.

'Bunter—where—you all right? Never said thank ı—dunno what I'm doing—anywhere to sleep—at?"

He drifted away into oblivion. The old song cam up mockingly, and wound its horrible fancies into h dreams :

" Then we shall coom an' ate oop doocks
On Ilkla' Moor bar t'at . . . .

An' that is how—an' that is how—is how . . . ."

. . . . .

When Wimsey next opened his eyes a pale Novembe sun was struggling in at the window. It seemed tha the fog had fulfilled its mission and departed. Fo some time he lay, vaguely unaware of how he came t be where he was ; then the outlines of recollectio straightened themselves, the drifting outposts of dream were called back, the burden of his preoccupatio settled down as usual. He became aware of an extrem bodily lassitude, and of the dragging pain of wrenche shoulder muscles. Examining himself perfunctorily, h found a bruised and tender zone beneath the armpi and round his chest and back, where the rescuing rop had hauled at him. It was painful to move, so he la back and closed his eyes once more.

Presently the door opened to admit Bunter, neatl clothed and bearing a tray from which rose a mos excellent odour of ham and eggs.

" Hullo, Bunter ! "

" Good morning, my lord ! I trust your lordship ha rested."

" Feel as fit as a fiddle, thanks—come to think of i why fiddle ?—except for a general feeling of havin' bee violently massaged by some fellow with cast-iron finge and knobbly joints. How about you ? "

" The arms are a trifle fatigued, thank you, my lord otherwise, I am happy to say, I feel no trace of th misadventure. Allow me, my lord."

He set the tray tenderly upon Lord Peter's read knees.

" They must be jolly well dragged out of the

:kets," said his lordship, " holdin' me up all that astly long time. I'm so beastly deep in debt to you eady, Bunter, it's not a bit of use tryin' to repay it. u know I won't forget, anyhow, don't you ? All right, won't be embarrassin' or anything—thanks awfully, yhow. That's that. What ? Did they give you any- ere decent to sleep ? I didn't seem to be able to sit an' take notice last night."

' I slept excellently, I thank your lordship." Mr. nter indicated a kind of truckle-bed in a corner of room. " They would have given me another room, lord, but in the circumstances, I preferred to remain h your lordship, trusting you would excuse the erty. I told them that I feared the effects of pro- ged immersion upon your lordship's health. I was easy, besides, about the intention of Grimethorpe. I red he might not feel altogether hospitably disposed, d that he might be led into some hasty action if we re not together."

' I shouldn't wonder. Most murderous-lookin' fellow ver set eyes on. I'll have to talk to him this morning— to Mrs. Grimethorpe. I'd take my oath she could tell something, what ? "

' I should say there was very little doubt of it, my d."

' Trouble is," pursued Wimsey, with his mouth full egg, " I don't know how to get at her. That jolly sband of hers seems to cherish the most unpleasant picions of anything that comes this way in trousers. he found out we'd been talkin' to her, what you may l privately, he might, as you say, be hurried by his lin's into doin' something regrettable."

" Just so, my lord."

" Still, the fellow must go an' look after his bally old m some time, and then, p'raps, we'll be able to tackle . Queer sort of woman—damn fine one, what ? nder what she made of Cathcart ? " he added singly.

Mr. Bunter volunteered no opinion on this delicate point.

"Well, Bunter, I think I'll get up. I don't suppose we're altogether welcome here. I didn't fancy the look in our host's eye last night."

"No, my lord. He made a deal of opposition about having your lordship conveyed to this room."

"Why, whose room is it?"

"His own and Mrs. Grimethorpe's, my lord. It appeared most suitable, there being a fireplace, and the bed already made up. Mrs. Grimethorpe showed great kindness, my lord, and the man Jake pointed out to Grimethorpe that it would doubtless be to his pecuniary advantage to treat your lordship with consideration."

"H'm. Nice, graspin' character, ain't he? Well it's up and away for me. O Lord! I *am* stiff. I say Bunter, have I any clothes to put on?"

"I have dried and brushed your lordship's suit to the best of my ability, my lord. It is not as I should wish to see it, but I think your lordship will be able to wear it to Riddlesdale."

"Well, I don't suppose the streets will be precisely crowded," retorted his lordship. "I *do* so want a hot bath. How about shavin' water?"

"I can procure that from the kitchen, my lord."

Bunter padded away, and Lord Peter, having pulled on a shirt and trousers with many grunts and groans, roamed over to the window. As usual with hard country dwellers, it was tightly shut, and a thick wedge of paper had been rammed in to keep the sash from rattling. He removed this and flung up the sash. The wind rollicked in, laden with peaty moor scents. He drank it in gladly. It was good to see the jolly old sun after all—he would have hated to die a sticky death in Peter's Pot. For a few minutes he stood there, returning thanks vaguely in his mind for the benefits of existence. Then he withdrew to finish dressing. The wad of paper was still in his hand, and he was about to fling it into the

, when a word caught his eye. He unrolled the paper. he read it his eyebrows went up and his mouth sed itself into an indescribable expression of whim- il enlightenment. Bunter, returning with the hot er, found his master transfixed, the paper in one d, and his socks in the other, and whistling a com- cated passage of Bach under his breath.

" Bunter," said his lordship, " I am, without excep- n, the biggest ass in Christendom. When a thing is se under my nose I can't see it. I get a telescope, l look for the explanation in Stapley. I deserve to crucified upside-down, as a cure for anæmia of the in. Jerry ! Jerry ! But, naturally, of course, you ten ass, isn't it obvious ? Silly old blighter. Why uldn't he tell Murbles or me ? "

Mr. Bunter advanced, the picture of respectful in- ry.

" Look at it—look at it ! " said Wimsey, with a terical squeak of laughter. " O Lord ! O Lord ! ck into the window-frame for anybody to find. *Just* Jerry. Signs his name to the business in letters a t long, leaves it conspicuously about, and then goes ay and is chivalrously silent."

Mr. Bunter put the jug down upon the washstand case of accident, and took the paper.

t was the missing letter from Tommy Freeborn.

No doubt about it. There it was—the evidence ich established the truth of Denver's evidence. More which established his alibi for the night of the h.

Not Cathcart—Denver.

Denver suggesting that the shooting party should rn in October to Riddlesdale, where they had ned the grouse season in August. Denver sneaking riedly out at 11.30 to walk two miles across the ds on a night when Farmer Grimethorpe had gone buy machinery. Denver carelessly plugging a

rattling sash on a stormy night with an important lette bearing his title on it for all to see. Denver padding bac at three in the morning like a homing tom-cat, to fa over his guest's dead body by the conservatory. Denve with his kind, stupid, English-gentleman ideas abou honour, going obstinately off to prison, rather than te his solicitor where he had been. Denver misleadin them all into the wildest and most ingenious solution of a mystery which now stood out clear as seven sun beams. Denver, whose voice the woman had though she recognised on the memorable day when she flun herself into the arms of his brother. Denver calml setting in motion the enormous, creaking machinery of trial by his noble peers in order to safeguard a woman reputation.

This very day, probably, a Select Committee of lorc was sitting " to inspect the Journals of this House upo former trials of peers in criminal cases, in order to brin the Duke of Denver to a speedy trial, and to report t the House what they should think proper thereupon. There they were : moving that an address be presente to His Majesty by the lords with white staves, to acquai His Majesty of the date proposed for the trial ; arrang ing for fitting up the Royal Gallery at Westminster humbly requesting the attendance of a sufficient polic force to keep clear the approaches leading to the House petitioning His Majesty graciously to appoint a Lor High Steward ; ordering, in sheeplike accordance wit precedent, that all lords be summoned to attend in the robes ; that every lord, in giving judgment, disclose h opinion upon his honour, laying his right hand upon h heart ; that the Sergeant-at-Arms be within the Hou to make proclamations in the King's name for keepin silence—and so on, and on, unendingly. And ther jammed in the window-sash, was the dirty little bit paper which, discovered earlier, would have made th whole monstrous ceremonial unnecessary.

Wimsey's adventure in the bog had unsettled h

ves. He sat down on the bed and laughed, with the s streaming down his face.

Ir. Bunter was speechless. Speechlessly he pro- ed a razor—and to the end of his days Wimsey never w how or from whom he had so adequately procured and began to strop it thoughtfully upon the palm is hand.

resently Wimsey pulled himself together and stag- ed to the window for a little cooling draught of or air. As he did so, a loud hullabaloo smote his and he perceived, in the courtyard below, Farmer methorpe striding among his dogs; when they vled he struck at them with a whip, and they howled in. Suddenly he glanced up at the window, with expression of such livid hatred that Wimsey stepped riedly back as though struck.

While Bunter shaved him he was silent.

. . . . .

he interview before Lord Peter was a delicate one; situation, however one looked at it, unpleasant. was under a considerable debt of gratitude to his tess; on the other hand, Denver's position was h that minor considerations really had to go to the l. His lordship had, nevertheless, never felt quite a cad as he did while descending the staircase at der's Hole.

n the big farm kitchen he found a stout country- nan, stirring a pot of stew. He asked for Mr. methorpe, and was told that he had gone out.

Can I speak to Mrs. Grimethorpe, please?"

he woman looked doubtfully at him, wiped her ds on her apron, and, going into the scullery, shouted, lrs. Grimethorpe!" A voice replied from some- ere outside.

Gentleman wants see tha."

Where is Mrs. Grimethorpe?" broke in Peter riedly.

I' t'dairy, recken."

"I'll go to her there," said Wimsey, stepping briskly out. He passed through a stone-paved scullery, and across a yard, in time to see Mrs. Grimethorpe emerging from a dark doorway opposite.

Framed there, the cold sunlight just lighting upon her still, dead-white face and heavy, dark hair, she was more wonderful than ever. There was no trace of Yorkshire descent in the long, dark eyes and curled mouth. The curve of nose and cheekbones vouched for an origin immensely remote; coming out of the darkness, she might have just risen from her far tomb in the Pyramids, dropping the dry and perfumed grave-bands from her fingers.

Lord Peter pulled himself together.

"Foreign," he said to himself matter-of-factly. "Touch of Jew perhaps, or Spanish, is it? Remarkable type. Don't blame Jerry. Couldn't live with Hele myself. Now for it."

He advanced quickly.

"Good morning," she said, "are you better?"

"Perfectly all right, thank you—thanks to your kindness, which I do not know how to repay."

"You will repay any kindness best by going at once," she answered in her remote voice. "My husband does not care for strangers, and 'twas unfortunate the way you met before."

"I will go directly. But I must first beg for the favour of a word with you." He peered past her into the dimness of the dairy. "In here, perhaps?"

"What do you want with me?"

She stepped back, however, and allowed him to follow her in.

"Mrs. Grimethorpe, I am placed in a most painful position. You know that my brother, the Duke of Denver, is in prison, awaiting his trial for a murder which took place on the night of October 13th?"

Her face did not change. "I have heard so."

"He has, in the most decided manner, refused

te where he was between eleven and three on that ght. His refusal has brought him into great danger his life."

She looked at him steadily.

" He feels bound in honour not to disclose his where- outs, though I know that, if he chose to speak, he ıld bring a witness to clear him."

' He seems to be a very honourable man." The d voice wavered a trifle, then steadied again.

' Yes. Undoubtedly, from his point of view, he doing the right thing. You will understand, however, ıt, as his brother, I am naturally anxious to have the ıtter put in its proper light."

' I don't understand why you are telling me all this. suppose, if the thing is disgraceful, he doesn't want known."

' Obviously. But to us—to his wife and young son, l to his sister and myself—his life and safety are ıtters of the first importance."

' Of more importance than his honour ? "

' The secret is a disgraceful one in a sense, and will e pain to his family. But it would be an infinitely eater disgrace that he should be executed for murder. e stigma in that case would involve all those who ır his name. The shame of the truth will, I fear, this very unjust society of ours, rest more upon the ness to his alibi than upon himself."

' Can you in that case expect the witness to come ward ? "

' To prevent the condemnation of an innocent man ? s, I think I may venture to expect even that."

' I repeat—why are you telling me all this ? "

' Because, Mrs. Grimethorpe, you know, even better n I, how innocent my brother is of this murder. lieve me, I am deeply distressed at having to say these ngs to you."

' I know nothing about your brother."

' Forgive me, that is not true."

"I know nothing. And surely, if the Duke will no speak, you should respect his reasons."

"I am not bound in any way."

"I am afraid I cannot help you. You are wastin time. If you cannot produce your missing witnes why do you not set about finding the real murderer If you do so you surely need not trouble about thi alibi. Your brother's movements are his own business."

"I could wish," said Wimsey, "you had not take up this attitude. Believe me, I would have done al I could to spare you. I have been working hard t find, as you say, the real murderer, but with no success The trial will probably take place at the end of th month."

Her lips twitched a little at that, but she said nothin

"I had hoped that with your help we might agre on some explanation—less than the truth, perhaps, bu sufficient to clear my brother. As it is, I fear I sha have to produce the proof I hold, and let matters tak their course."

That, at last, struck under her guard. A dull flus crept up her cheeks; one hand tightened upon th handle of the churn, where she had rested it.

"What do you mean by proof?"

"I can prove that on the night of the 13th my broth slept in the room I occupied last night," said Wimse with calculated brutality.

She winced. "It is a lie. You cannot prove it. H will deny it. I shall deny it."

"He was not there?"

"No."

"Then how did this come to be wedged in the sas of the bedroom window?"

At sight of the letter she broke down, crumplin up in a heap against the table. The set lines of her fa distorted themselves into a mere caricature of terror.

"No, no, no! It is a lie! God help me!"

"Hush!" said Wimsey peremptorily. "Someon

l hear you." He dragged her to her feet. "Tell truth, and we will see if we can find a way out. It true—he was here that night?"

"You know it."

"When did he come?"

"At a quarter past twelve."

"Who let him in?"

"He had the keys."

"When did he leave you?"

"A little after two."

"Yes, that fits in all right. Three quarters of an ır to go and three quarters to come back. He stuck s into the window, I suppose, to keep it from rat- ıg?"

"There was a high wind—I was nervous. I thought ry sound was my husband coming back."

"Where was your husband?"

"At Stapley."

"Had he suspected this?"

"Yes, for some time."

"Since my brother was here in August?"

"Yes. But he could get no proof. If he had had oof he would have killed me. You have seen him. is a devil."

"M'm."

Wimsey was silent. The woman glanced fearfully his face and seemed to read some hope there, for clutched him by the arm.

"It you call me to give evidence," she said, "he l know. He *will* kill me. For God's sake, have pity. at letter is my death-warrant. Oh, for the mother t bore you, have mercy upon me. My life is a hell, l when I die I shall go to hell for my sin. Find ıe other way—you can—you must."

Wimsey gently released himself.

"Don't do that, Mrs. Grimethorpe. We might be n. I am deeply sorry for you, and, if I can get my ther out of this without bringing you in, I promise

you I will. But you see the difficulty. Why don you leave this man? He is openly brutal to you."

She laughed.

"Do you think he'd leave me alive while the la was slowly releasing me? Knowing him, do you thin so?"

Wimsey really did not think so.

"I will promise you this, Mrs. Grimethorpe. I wi do all I can to avoid having to use your evidenc But if there should be no other way, I will see that yo have police protection from the moment that the sub pœna is served on you."

"And for the rest of my life?"

"When you are once in London we will see abo freeing you from this man."

"No. If you call upon me, I am a lost woman. B you will find another way?"

"I will try, but I can promise nothing. I will d everything that is possible to protect you. If you ca at all for my brother——"

"I don't know. I am so horribly afraid. He w kind and good to me. He was—so different. But am afraid—I'm afraid."

Wimsey turned. Her terrified eyes had seen th shadow cross the threshold. Grimethorpe was at th door, glowering in upon them.

"Ah, Mr. Grimethorpe," exclaimed Wimsey chee fully, "there you are. Awfully pleased to see you a thank you, don'tcherknow, for puttin' me up. I w just saying so to Mrs. Grimethorpe, an' asking her say good-bye to you for me. Must be off now, I' afraid. Bunter and I are ever so grateful to you bo for all your kindness. Oh, and I say, could you fi me the stout fellows who hauled us out of that P of yours last night—if it is yours. Nasty, damp thi to keep outside the front door, what? I'd like to tha 'em."

"Dom good thing for unwelcome guests," said th

n ferociously. "An' tha'd better be off afore Ah ows thee out."

"I'm just off," said Peter. "Good-bye again, s. Grimethorpe, and a thousand thanks."

He collected Bunter, rewarded his rescuers suitably, k an affectionate farewell of the enraged farmer, l departed, sore in body and desperately confused mind.

CHAPTER XIII

MANON

" *That one word, my dear Watson, should have tol me the whole story, had I been the ideal reasoner whic you are so fond of depicting.*"—Memoirs of Sherloc Holmes.

" THANK God," said Parker. " Well, that settles it.

" It does—and yet again, it doesn't," retorted Lor Peter. He leaned back against the fat silk cushion i the sofa corner meditatively.

" Of course, it's disagreeable having to give th woman away," said Parker sensibly and pleasantly, " bu these things have to be done."

" I know. It's all simply awfully nice and all tha And Jerry, who's got the poor woman into this mes has to be considered first. I know. And if we don restrain Grimethorpe quite successfully, and he cu her throat for her, it'll be simply rippin' for Jer to think of all his life. . . . . Jerry ! I say, you know what frightful idiots we were not to see the truth rig off ! I mean—of course, my sister-in-law is an awful good woman, and all that, but Mrs. Grimethorpe- whew ! I told you about the time she mistook me f Jerry. One crowded, split second of glorious all-overis ness. I ought to have known then. Our voices are alik of course, and she couldn't see in that dark kitchen. don't believe there's an ounce of any feeling left in t woman except sheer terror—but, ye gods ! what ey and skin ! Well, never mind. Some undeservi fellows have all the luck. Have you got any really go stories ? No ? Well, I'll tell you some—enlarge yo

nd and all that. Do you know the rhyme about the ıng man at the War Office ? "

Mr. Parker endured five stories with commendable ience, and then suddenly broke down.

" Hurray ! said Wimsey. " Splendid man ! I e to see you melt into a refined snigger from time to ıe. I'll spare you the really outrageous one about the ıng housewife and the traveller in bicycle-pumps. u know, Charles, I really *should* like to know who did hcart in. Legally, it's enough to prove Jerry inno- ıt, but, Mrs. Grimethorpe or no Mrs. Grimethorpe, loesn't do us credit in a professional capacity. ' The ıer weakens, but the governor is firm ' ; that is, as a ther I am satisfied—I may say light-hearted—but as euth I am cast down, humiliated, thrown back upon self, a lodge in a garden of cucumbers. Besides, of all ences an alibi is the most awkward to establish, unless ıumber of independent and disinterested witnesses nbine to make it thoroughly air-tight. If Jerry sticks ıis denial, the most they can be sure of is that *either or* Mrs. Grimethorpe is being chivalrous."

" But you've got the letter."

Yes. But how are we going to prove that it came t evening ? The envelope is destroyed. Fleming ıembers nothing about it. Jerry might have received ays earlier. Or it might be a complete fake. Who is say that I didn t put it in the window myself and tend to find it. After all, I'm hardly what you would disinterested."

Bunter saw you find it."

He didn't, Charles. At that precise moment he out of the room fetching shaving-water."

Oh, was he ? "

Moreover, only Mrs. Grimethorpe can swear to ıt is really the important point—the moment of y's arrival and departure. Unless he was at Grider's e before 12.30 at least, it's immaterial whether he there or not."

"Well," said Parker, "can't we keep Mrs. Grime thorpe up our sleeve, so to speak——"

"Sounds a bit abandoned," said Lord Peter, "bu we will keep her with pleasure if you like."

"—and meanwhile," pursued Mr. Parker, unheeding "do our best to find the actual criminal?"

"Oh, yes," said Lord Peter, "and that reminds me I made a discovery at the Lodge—at least, I think so Did you notice that somebody had been forcing on of the study windows?"

"No, really?"

"Yes; I found distinct marks. Of course, it was long time after the murder, but there were scratche on the catch all right—the sort of thing a penknife woul leave."

"What fools we were not to make an examinatio at the time!"

"Come to think of it, why should you have? Any how, I asked Fleming about it, and he said he di remember, now he came to think of it, that on th Thursday morning he'd found the window open, an couldn't account for it. And here's another thing I've had a letter from my friend Tim Watchett. He it is:

"My Lord.—About our conversation. I hav found a Man who was with the Party in question the 'Pig and Whistle' on the night of the 13th u and he tells me that the Party borrowed his bicycl and same was found afterwards in the ditch whe Party was picked up with the Handlebars bent an wheels buckled.

"Trusting to the Continuance of your esteem favour.

"Timothy Watchett

"What do you think of that?"

"Good enough to go on," said Parker. "At lea we are no longer hampered with horrible doubts."

'No. And, though she's my sister, I must say that all the blithering she-asses Mary is the blitheringest. king up with that awful bounder to start with——"

'She was jolly fine about it," said Mr. Parker, ting rather red in the face. "It's just because she's ır sister that you can't appreciate what a fine thing e did. How should a big, chivalrous nature like hers through a man like that? She's so sincere and rough herself, she judges everyone by the same stan-d. She wouldn't believe anybody could be so thin l wobbly-minded as Goyles till it was *proved* to her. d even then she couldn't bring herself to think ill of n till he'd given himself away out of his own mouth. was wonderful, the way she fought for him. Think at it must have meant to such a splendid, straight-ward woman to——"

'All right, all right," cried Peter, who had been ring at his friend, transfixed with astonishment.)on't get worked up. I believe you. Spare me. I'm y a brother. All brothers are fools. All lovers are atics—Shakespeare says so. Do you want Mary, man? You surprise me, but I believe brothers ays are surprised. Bless you, dear children!"

'Damn it all, Wimsey," said Parker, very angry, ou've no right to talk like that. I only said how atly I admired your sister—everyone must admire h pluck and staunchness. You needn't be insulting. now she's Lady Mary Wimsey and damnably rich, l I'm only a common police official with nothing a r and a pension to look forward to, but there's no d to sneer about it."

'I'm not sneering," retorted Peter indignantly. "I 't imagine why anybody should want to marry my er, but you're a friend of mine and a damn good sort, you've my good word for what it's worth. Besides ash it all, man!—to put it on the lowest grounds, do k what it might have been! A Socialist Conchy of ther bowels nor breeding, or a card-sharping dark

horse with a mysterious past ! Mother and Jerry must have got to the point when they'd welcome a decent God-fearing plumber, let alone a policeman. Only thing I'm afraid of is that Mary, havin' such beastly bad taste in blokes, won't know how to appreciate a really decent fellow like you, old son."

Mr. Parker begged his friend's pardon for his unworthy suspicions, and they sat a little time in silence. Parker sipped his port, and saw unimaginable visions warmly glowing in its rosy depths. Wimsey pulled out his pocket-book, and began idly turning over its contents, throwing old letters into the fire, unfolding and refolding memoranda, and reviewing a miscellaneous series of other people's visiting-cards. He came at length to the slip of blotting-paper from the study at Riddlesdale, to whose fragmentary markings he had since given scarcely a thought.

Presently Mr. Parker, finishing his port and recalling his mind with an effort, remembered that he had been meaning to tell Peter something before the name of Lady Mary had driven all other thoughts out of his head. He turned to his host, open-mouthed for speech, but his remark never got beyond a preliminary click like that of a clock about to strike, for, even as he turned, Lord Peter brought his fist down on the little table with a bang that made the decanters ring, and cried out in the loud voice of complete and sudden enlightenment :

" *Manon Lescaut !* "

" Eh ? " said Mr. Parker.

" Boil my brains ! " said Lord Peter. " Boil 'em and mash 'em and serve 'em up with butter as a dish of turnips, for it's damn well all they're fit for ! Look at me ! " (Mr. Parker scarcely needed this exhortation.) " Here we've been worryin' over Jerry, an' worryin' over Mary, an' huntin' for Goyleses an' Grimethorpes and God knows who—and all the time I'd got this little bit of paper tucked away in my pocket. The blot up

e paper's rim a blotted paper was to him, and it was thing more. But Manon, Manon! Charles, if I'd d the grey matter of a woodlouse that book ought to ve told me the whole story. And think what we'd ve been saved!"

"I wish you wouldn't be so excited," said Parker. I'm sure it's perfectly splendid for you to see your y so clearly, but I never read *Manon Lescaut*, and u haven't shown me the blotting-paper, and I haven't e foggiest idea what you've discovered."

Lord Peter passed the relic over without comment.

"I observe," said Parker, "that the paper is rather mpled and dirty, and smells powerfully of tobacco d Russian leather, and deduce that you have been eping it in your pocket-book."

"No!" said Wimsey incredulously. "And when u actually saw me take it out! Holmes, how do you it?"

"At one corner," pursued Parker, "I see two blots, e rather larger than the other. I think someone must ve shaken a pen there. Is there anything sinister out the blot?"

"I haven't noticed anything."

'Some way below the blots the Duke has signed his me two or three times—or, rather, his title. The erence is that his letters were not to intimates."

'The inference is justifiable, I fancy."

'Colonel Marchbanks has a neat signature."

'He can hardly mean mischief," said Peter. "He ns his name like an honest man! Proceed."

'There's a sprawly message about five something fine something. Do you see anything occult there?"

'The number five may have a cabalistic meaning, t I admit I don't know what it is. There are five ases, five fingers, five great Chinese precepts, five oks of Moses, to say nothing of the mysterious en- es hymned in the Dilly Song—'Five are the flam- ys under the pole.' I must admit that I have always

panted to know what the five flamboys were. But, no knowing, I get no help from it in this case."

"Well, that's all, except a fragment consisting o 'oe' on one line, and 'is fou—' below it."

"What do you make of that?"

"'Is found,' I suppose."

"Do you?"

"That seems the simplest interpretation. Or possibl 'his foul'—there seems to have been a sudden rus of ink to the pen just there. Do you think it is 'hi foul'? Was the Duke writing about Cathcart's fou play? Is that what you mean?"

"No, I don't make that of it. Besides, I don't thin it's Jerry's writing."

"Whose is it?"

"I don't know, but I can guess."

"And it leads somewhere?"

"It tells the whole story."

"Oh, cough it up, Wimsey. Even Dr. Watson woul lose patience."

"Tut, tut! Try the line above."

"Well, there's only 'oe.'"

"Yes, well?"

"Well, I don't know. Poet, poem, manœuvre, Loe edition, Citroen—it might be anything."

"Dunno about that. There aren't lashings English words with 'oe' in them—and it's written close it almost looks like a diphthong at that."

"Perhaps it isn't an English word."

"Exactly; perhaps it isn't."

"Oh! Oh, I see. French?"

"Ah, you're gettin' warm."

"*Sœur—œuvre—œuf—bœuf*——"

"No, no. You were nearer the first time."

"*Sœur—cœur!*"

"*Cœur*. Hold on a moment. Look at the scrat in front of that."

"Wait a bit—*er—cer*——"

" How about *percer ?* "
" I believe you're right. ' *Percer le cœur.*' "
" Yes. Or ' *perceras le cœur.*' "
" That's better. It seems to need another letter or
o."
" And now your ' is found ' line."
" *Fou !* "
" Who ? "
" I didn't say ' who ' ; I said ' *fou.*' "
" I know you did. I said who ? "
" Who ? "
" Who's *fou ?* "
" Oh, *is.* By Jove, ' *suis* ' ! ' *Je suis fou.*' "
" *A la bonne heure !* And I suggest that the next
rds are ' *de douleur*,' or something like it."
" They might be."
" Cautious beast ! I say they are."
" Well, and suppose they are ? "
" It tells us everything."
" Nothing ! "
" Everything, I say. Think. This was written on
e day Cathcart died. Now who in the house would
likely to write these words, ' *perceras le cœur . . .*
suis fou de douleur ' ? Take everybody. I know it
n't Jerry's fist, and he wouldn't use those expressions.
olonel or Mrs. Marchbanks ? Not Pygmalion likely !
eddy ? Couldn't write passionate letters in French to
ve his life."
" No, of course not. It would have to be either
thcart or—Lady Mary."
" Rot ! It couldn't be Mary."
" Why not ? "
" Not unless she changed her sex, you know."
" Of course not. It would have to be ' *je suis folle.*'
hen Cathcart——"
" Of course. He lived in France all his life. Consider
s bank-book. Consider——"
" Lord ! Wimsey, we've been blind."

"Yes."

"And listen! I was going to tell you. The Sûreté write me that they've traced one of Cathcart's bank notes."

"Where to?"

"To a Mr. François who owns a lot of house property near the Etoile."

"And lets it out in *appartements!*"

"No doubt."

"When's the next train? Bunter!"

"My lord!"

Mr. Bunter hurried to the door at the call.

"The next boat-train for Paris?"

"Eight-twenty, my lord, from Waterloo."

"We're going by it. How long?"

"Twenty minutes, my lord."

"Pack my toothbrush and call a taxi."

"Certainly, my lord."

"But, Wimsey, what light does it throw on Cathcart's murder? Did this woman——"

"I've no time," said Wimsey hurriedly. "But I'll be back in a day or two. Meanwhile——"

He hunted hastily in the bookshelf.

"Read this."

He flung the book at his friend and plunged into his bedroom.

At eleven o'clock, as a gap of dirty water disfigured with oil and bits of paper widened between the *Normannia* and the quay; while hardened passengers fortified their sea-stomachs with cold ham and pickles, and the more nervous studied the Boddy jackets in their cabins; while the harbour lights winked and swam right and left, and Lord Peter scraped acquaintance with a second-rate cinema actor in the bar, Charles Parker sat with a puzzled frown, before the fire at 110 Piccadilly, making his first acquaintance with the delicate masterpiece of the Abbé Prévost.

CHAPTER XIV

E EDGE OF THE AXE TOWARDS HIM

ne 1. *Westminster Hall. Enter as to the Parliament, Bolingbroke, Aumerle, Northumberland, Percy, Fitzwater, Surrey, the Bishop of Carlisle, the Abbot of Westminster, and another Lord, Herald, Officers, and Bagot.*

LINGBROKE : Call forth Bagot.
Now, Bagot, freely speak thy mind ;
What thou dost know of noble Gloucester's death ;
Who wrought it with the king, and who performed
The bloody office of his timeless end.

GOT : Then set before my face the Lord Aumerle.

King Richard II.

I E historic trial of the Duke of Denver for murder ned as soon as Parliament reassembled after the ·istmas vacation. The papers had leaderettes on 'rial by his Peers," by a Woman Barrister, and " The vilege of Peers : should it be abolished ? " by a dent of History. The *Evening Banner* got into able for contempt by publishing an article entitled 'he Silken Rope " (by an Antiquarian), which was med to be prejudicial, and the *Daily Trumpet*—the pour organ—inquired sarcastically why, when a peer

was tried, the fun of seeing the show should be reserve to the few influential persons who could wangle ticke for the Royal Gallery.

Mr. Murbles and Detective Inspector Parker, in clos consultation, went about with preoccupied faces, whil Sir Impey Biggs retired into a complete eclipse for thre days, revolved about by Mr. Glibbery, K.C., M Brownrigg-Fortescue, K.C., and a number of less satellites. The schemes of the Defence were kept da indeed—the more so that they found themselves on th eve of the struggle deprived of their principal witnes and wholly ignorant whether or not he would be forth coming with his testimony.

Lord Peter had returned from Paris at the end four days, and had burst in like a cyclone at Gre Ormond Street. " I've got it," he said, " but it's touc and go. Listen ! "

For an hour Parker had listened, feverishly takir notes.

" You can work on that," said Wimsey. " Te Murbles. I'm off."

His next appearance was at the American Embass The Ambassador, however, was not there, havir received a royal mandate to dine. Wimsey damned th dinner, abandoned the polite, horn-rimmed secretarie and leapt back into his taxi with a demand to be drive to Buckingham Palace. Here a great deal of insisten with scandalised officials produced first a high official, then a very high official, and, finally, the Amer can Ambassador and a Royal Personage while the me was yet in their mouths.

" Oh, yes," said the Ambassador, " of course it c be done——"

" Surely, surely," said the Personage genially, " mustn't have any delay. Might cause an internatior misunderstanding, and a lot of paragraphs about El Island. Terrible nuisance to have to adjourn the trial dreadful fuss, isn't it ? Our secretaries are everlasting

nging things along to our place to sign about extra icemen and seating accommodation. Good luck to ı, Wimsey! Come and have something while they your papers through. When does your boat go?"

'To-morrow morning, sir. I'm catching the Liverol train in an hour—if I can."

'You surely will," said the Ambassador cordially, ning a note. "And they say the English can't hustle." So, with his papers all in order, his lordship set sail m Liverpool the next morning, leaving his legal resentatives to draw up alternative schemes of ence.

. . . . .

'Then the peers, two by two, in their order, beginıg with the youngest baron."

Garter King-of-Arms, very hot and bothered, fussed happily around the three hundred or so British peers o were sheepishly struggling into their robes, while heralds did their best to line up the assembly and ep them from wandering away when once arranged.

'Of all the farces!" grumbled Lord Attenbury tably. He was a very short, stout gentleman of a leric countenance, and was annoyed to find himself xt to the Earl of Strathgillan and Begg, an extremely lean nobleman, with pronounced views on Proition and the Legitimation question.

'I say, Attenbury," said a kindly, brick-red peer, h five rows of ermine on his shoulder, "is it true t Wimsey hasn't come back? My daughter tells me heard he'd gone to collect evidence in the States. ıy the States?"

'Dunno," said Attenbury; "but Wimsey's a dashed ver fellow. When he found those emeralds of mine, ı know, I said——"

'Your grace, your grace," cried Rouge Dragon perately, diving in, "your grace is out of line again."

'Eh, what?" said the brick-faced peer. "Oh, nme! Must obey orders, I suppose, what?" And

was towed away from the mere earls and pushed int position next to the Duke of Wiltshire, who was deaf and a distant connection of Denver's on the distaff side

The Royal Gallery was packed. In the seats reserve below the Bar for peeresses sat the Dowager Duches of Denver, beautifully dressed and defiant. She suffere much from the adjacent presence of her daughter-in law, whose misfortune it was to become disagreeabl when she was unhappy—perhaps the heaviest curse tha can be laid on man, who is born to sorrow.

Behind the imposing array of Counsel in full-bottome wigs in the body of the hall were seats reserved for wit nesses, and here Mr. Bunter was accommodated—to b called if the defence should find it necessary to establis the alibi—the majority of the witnesses being pent u in the King's Robing-Room, gnawing their fingers an glaring at one another. On either side, above the Ba were the benches for the peers—each in his own righ a judge both of fact and law—while on the high da the great chair of state stood ready for the Lord Hig Steward.

The reporters at their little table were beginning t fidget and look at their watches. Muffled by the wal and the buzz of talk, Big Ben dropped eleven slow note into the suspense. A door opened. The reporte started to their feet ; counsel rose ; everybody rose the Dowager Duchess whispered irrepressibly to he neighbour that it reminded her of the Voice tha breathed o'er Eden ; and the procession streamed slow in, lit by a shaft of wintry sunshine from the tall win dows.

The proceedings were opened by a Proclamation Silence from the Sergeant-at-Arms, after which th Clerk of the Crown in Chancery, kneeling at the fo of the throne, presented the Commission under th Great Seal to the Lord High Steward,* who, finding n use for it, returned it with great solemnity to the Cle

* The Lord Chancellor held the appointment on this occasion as usual.

the Crown. The latter accordingly proceeded to ad it at dismal and wearisome length, affording the sembly an opportunity of judging just how bad the oustics of the chamber were. The Sergeant-at-Arms torted with great emphasis, " God Save the King," hereupon Garter King-of-Arms and the Gentleman sher of the Black Rod, kneeling again, handed the ord High Steward his staff of office. (" So picturesque, n't it ? " said the Dowager—" quite High Church, ou know.")

The Certiorari and Return followed in a long, sonorous gmarole, which, starting with George the Fifth by the race of God, called upon all the Justices and Judges the Old Bailey, enumerated the Lord Mayor of ondon, the Recorder, and a quantity of assorted alder- en and justices, skipped back to our Lord the King, amed about the City of London, Counties of London nd Middlesex, Essex, Kent, and Surrey, mentioned our te Sovereign Lord King William the Fourth, branched f to the Local Government Act one thousand eight ndred and eighty-eight, lost its way in a list of all easons, murders, felonies, and misdemeanours by homsoever and in what manner soever done, com- itted or perpetrated and by whom or to whom, when, ow and after what manner and of all other articles and rcumstances concerning the premises and every one them and any of them in any manner whatsoever, and last, triumphantly, after reciting the names of the ole Grand Jury, came to the presentation of the in- ctment with a sudden, brutal brevity.

" The Jurors for our Lord the King upon their oaths esent that the most noble and puissant prince Gerald ristian Wimsey, Viscount St. George, Duke of enver, a Peer of the United Kingdom of Great Britain d Ireland, on the thirteenth day of October in the ar of Our Lord one thousand nine hundred and enty—in the Parish of Riddlesdale in the County of orkshire did kill and murder Denis Cathcart."

"After which, Proclamation* was made by the Sergeant-at-Arms for the Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod to call in Gerald Christian Wimsey, Viscount St. George, Duke of Denver, to appear at the Bar to answer his indictment, who, being come to the Bar, kneeled until the Lord High Steward acquainted him that he might rise."

The Duke of Denver looked very small and pink and lonely in his blue serge suit, the only head uncovered among all his peers, but he was not without a certain dignity as he was conducted to the "Stool placed within the Bar," which is deemed appropriate to noble prisoners, and he listened to the Lord High Steward's rehearsal of the charge with a simple gravity which became him very well.

"Then the said Duke of Denver was arraigned by the Clerk of the Parliaments in the usual manner and asked whether he was Guilty or Not Guilty, to which he pleaded Not Guilty."

Whereupon Sir Wigmore Wrinching, the Attorney-General, rose to open the case for the Crown.

After the usual preliminaries to the effect that the case was a very painful one and the occasion a very solemn one, Sir Wigmore proceeded to unfold the story from the beginning: the quarrel, the shot at 3 a.m., the pistol, the finding of the body, the disappearance of the letter, and the rest of the familiar tale. He hinted, moreover, that evidence would be called to show that the quarrel between Denver and Cathcart had motives other than those alleged by the prisoner, and that the latter would turn out to have had "good reason to fear exposure at Cathcart's hands." At which point the accused was observed to glance uneasily at his solicitor. The exposition took only a short time, and Sir Wigmore proceeded to call witnesses.

The prosecution being unable to call the Duke of

* For Report of the procedure see House of Lords Journal for the date in question.

enver, the first important witness was Lady Mary imsey. After telling about her relations with the urdered man, and describing the quarrel, " At three clock," she proceeded, " I got up and went down-airs."

" In consequence of what did you do so ? " inquired r Wigmore, looking round the Court with the air of a an about to produce his great effect.

" In consequence of an appointment I had made to eet a friend."

All the reporters looked up suddenly, like dogs pecting a piece of biscuit, and Sir Wigmore started violently that he knocked his brief over upon the ad of the Clerk to the House of Lords sitting below m.

" Indeed ! Now, witness, remember you are on your th, and be very careful. What was it caused you to ake at three o'clock ? "

" I was not asleep. I was waiting for my appoint-ent."

" And while you were waiting did you hear any-ing ? "

" Nothing at all."

" Now, Lady Mary, I have here your deposition orn before the Coroner. I will read it to you. Please ten very carefully. You say, ' At three o'clock I was kened by a shot. I thought it might be poachers. It anded very loud, close to the house. I went down to d out what it was.' Do you remember making that tement ? "

" Yes, but it was not true."

" Not true ? "

" No."

" In the face of that statement, you still say that you ard nothing at three o'clock ? "

" I heard nothing at all. I went down because I had appointment."

" My lords," said Sir Wigmore, with a very red face.

"I must ask leave to treat this witness as a hostile witness."

Sir Wigmore's fiercest onslaught, however, produced no effect, except a reiteration of the statement that no shot had been heard at any time. With regard to the finding of the body, Lady Mary explained that when she said, "Oh, God! Gerald, you've killed him," she was under the impression that the body was that of the friend who had made the appointment. Here a fierce wrangle ensued as to whether the story of the appointment was relevant. The Lords decided that on the whole it was relevant; and the entire Goyles story came out, together with the intimation that Mr Goyles was in court and could be produced. Eventually, with a loud snort, Sir Wigmore Wrinching gave up the witness to Sir Impey Biggs, who, rising suavely and looking extremely handsome, brought back the discussion to a point long previous.

"Forgive the nature of the question," said Sir Impey bowing blandly, "but will you tell us whether, in your opinion, the late Captain Cathcart was deeply in love with you?"

"No, I am sure he was not; it was an arrangement for our mutual convenience."

"From your knowledge of his character, do you suppose he was capable of a very deep affection?"

"I think he might have been, for the right woman I should say he had a very passionate nature."

"Thank you. You have told us that you met Captain Cathcart several times when you were staying in Paris last February. Do you remember going with him to a jeweller's—Monsieur Briquet's in the Rue de la Paix?"

"I may have done; I cannot exactly remember."

"The date to which I should like to draw your attention is the sixth."

"I could not say."

"Do you recognise this trinket?"

Here the green-eyed cat was handed to witness.

" No ; I have never seen it before."
" Did Captain Cathcart ever give you one like it ? "
" Never."
" Did you ever possess such a jewel ? "
" I am quite positive I never did."
" My lords, I put in this diamond and platinum cat.
ıank you, Lady Mary."
James Fleming, being questioned closely as to the
livery of the post, continued to be vague and forget-
l, leaving the Court, on the whole, with the impression
at no letter had ever been delivered to the Duke.
r Wigmore, whose opening speech had contained
ıister allusions to an attempt to blacken the character
the victim, smiled disagreeably, and handed the
tness over to Sir Impey. The latter contented him-
lf with extracting an admission that witness could not
ear positively one way or the other, and passed on
ımediately to another point.
" Do you recollect whether any letters came by the
me post for any of the other members of the party ? "
" Yes ; I took three or four into the billiard-room."
" Can you say to whom they were addressed ? "
" There were several for Colonel Marchbanks and
.e for Captain Cathcart."
" Did Captain Cathcart open his letter there and
en ? "
" I couldn't say, sir. I left the room immediately to
ke his grace's letters to the study."
" Now will you tell us how the letters are collected
r the post in the morning at the Lodge ? "
" They are put into the post-bag, which is locked.
is grace keeps one key and the post-office has the
her. The letters are put in through a slit in the top."
" On the morning after Captain Cathcart's death
ere the letters taken to the post as usual ? "
" Yes, sir."
" By whom ? "
" I took the bag down myself, sir."

" Had you an opportunity of seeing what letters wer in it ? "

" I saw there was two or three when the postmistres took 'em out of the bag, but I couldn't say who they wa addressed to or anythink of that."

" Thank you."

Sir Wigmore Wrinching here bounced up like a ver irritable jack-in-the-box.

" Is this the first time you have mentioned thi letter which you say you delivered to Captain Cathca on the night of his murder ? "

" My lords," cried Sir Impey. " I protest agains this language. We have as yet had no proof that an murder was committed."

This was the first indication of the line of defenc which Sir Impey proposed to take, and caused a littl rustle of excitement.

" My lords," went on Counsel, replying to a questio of the Lord High Steward, " I submit that so far ther has been no attempt to prove murder, and that, unt the prosecution have established the murder, such word cannot properly be put into the mouth of a wit ness."

" Perhaps, Sir Wigmore, it would be better to us some other word."

" It makes no difference to our case, my lord ; I bo to your lordships' decision. Heaven knows that would not seek, even by the lightest or most trivia word, to hamper the defence on so serious a charge."

" My lords," interjected Sir Impey, " if the learne Attorney-General considers the word murder to be triviality, it would be interesting to know to wha words he does attach importance."

" The learned Attorney-General has agreed to substi tute another word," said the Lord High Stewar soothingly, and nodding to Sir Wigmore to proceed.

Sir Impey, having achieved his purpose of robbin the Attorney-General's onslaught on the witness of som

f its original impetus, sat down, and Sir Wigmore epeated his question.

" I mentioned it first to Mr. Murbles about three veeks ago."

" Mr. Murbles is the solicitor for the accused, I elieve."

" Yes, sir."

" And how was it," inquired Sir Wigmore ferociously, ettling his pince-nez on his rather prominent nose, nd glowering at the witness, " that you did not men- ion this letter at the inquest or at the earlier proceedings n the case ? "

" I wasn't asked about it, sir."

" What made you suddenly decide to go and tell Mr. Murbles about it ? "

" He asked me, sir."

" Oh, he asked you ; and you conveniently remem- ered it when it was suggested to you ? "

" No, sir. I remembered it all the time. That is to ay, I hadn't given any special thought to it, sir."

" Oh, you remembered it all the time, though you adn't given any thought to it. Now I put it to you hat you had not remembered about it at all till it was uggested to you by Mr. Murbles."

" Mr. Murbles didn't suggest nothing, sir. He asked me whether any other letters came by that post, and hen I remembered it."

" Exactly. When it was suggested to you, you remem- ered it, and not before."

" No, sir. That is, if I'd been asked before I should ave remembered it and mentioned it, but, not being sked, I didn't think it would be of any importance, sir."

" You didn't think it of any importance that this man received a letter a few hours before his—decease? "

" No, sir. I reckoned if it had been of any importance he police would have asked about it, sir."

" Now, James Fleming, I put it to you again that t never occurred to you that Captain Cathcart might

have received a letter the night he died till the idea was put into your head by the defence."

The witness, baffled by this interrogative negative, made a confused reply, and Sir Wigmore, glancing round the house as much as to say, "You see this shifty fellow," proceeded :

"I suppose it didn't occur to you either to mention to the police about the letters in the post-bag ? "

"No, sir."

"Why not ? "

"I didn't think it was my place, sir."

"Did you think about it at all ? "

"No, sir."

"Do you ever think ? "

"No, sir—I mean, yes, sir."

"Then will you please think what you are saying now."

"Yes, sir."

"You say that you took all these important letters out of the house without authority and without acquainting the police ? "

"I had my orders, sir."

"From whom ? "

"They was his grace's orders, sir."

"Ah ! His grace's orders. When did you get that order ? "

"It was part of my regular duty, sir, to take the bag to the post each morning."

"And did it not occur to you that in a case like this the proper information of the police might be more important than your orders ? "

"No, sir."

Sir Wigmore sat down with a disgusted look ; and Sir Impey took the witness in hand again.

"Did the thought of this letter delivered to Captain Cathcart never pass through your mind between the day of the death and the day when Mr. Murbles spoke to you about it ? "

'Well, it did pass through my mind, in a manner speaking, sir."

"When was that?"

"Before the Grand Jury, sir."

"And how was it you didn't speak about it then?"

"The gentleman said I was to confine myself to the estions, and not say nothing on my own, sir."

"Who was this very peremptory gentleman?"

"The lawyer that came down to ask questions for Crown, sir."

"Thank you," said Sir Impey smoothly, sitting wn, and leaning over to say something, apparently an amusing nature, to Mr. Glibbery.

The question of the letter was further pursued in examination of the Hon. Freddy. Sir Wigmore inching laid great stress upon this witness's assertion t deceased had been in excellent health and spirits en retiring to bed on the Wednesday evening, and l spoken of his approaching marriage. "He seemed ticularly cheerio, you know," said the Hon. Freddy.

"Particularly what?" inquired the Lord High ward.

Cheerio, my lord," said Sir Wigmore, with a recatory bow.

I do not know whether that is a dictionary word," his lordship, entering it upon his notes with meti- ous exactness, "but I take it to be synonymous with erful."

The Hon. Freddy, appealed to, said he thought he ant more than just cheerful, more merry and bright, know.

May we take it that he was in exceptionally lively its?" suggested Counsel.

Take it in any spirit you like," muttered the wit- s, adding, more happily, "Take a peg of John g."

The deceased was particularly lively and merry en he went to bed," said Sir Wigmore, frowning

horribly, " and looking forward to his marriage in th near future. Would that be a fair statement of his con dition ? "

The Hon. Freddy agreed to this.

Sir Impey did not cross-examine as to witness' account of the quarrel, but went straight to his point.

" Do you recollect anything about the letters tha were brought in the night of the death ? "

" Yes ; I had one from my aunt. The Colonel ha some, I fancy, and there was one for Cathcart."

" Did Captain Cathcart read his letter there and then?

" No, I'm sure he didn't. You see, I opened min and then I saw he was shoving his away in his pocke and I thought——"

" Never mind what you thought," said Sir Impe " What did you do ? "

" I said, ' Excuse me, you don't mind, do you ? And he said, ' Not at all ' ; but he didn't read his ; ar I remember thinking——"

" We can't have that, you know," said the Lo High Steward.

" But that's why I'm so sure he didn't open it," sa the Hon. Freddy, hurt. " You see, I said to mys at the time what a secretive fellow he was, and that how I know."

Sir Wigmore, who had bounced up with his mou open, sat down again.

" Thank you, Mr. Arbuthnot," said Sir Impe smiling.

Colonel and Mrs. Marchbanks testified to havi heard movements in the Duke's study at 11.30. Th had heard no shot or other noise. There was no cro examination.

Mr. Pettigrew-Robinson gave a vivid account of t quarrel, and asserted very positively that there cou be no mistaking the sound of the Duke's bedroom do

" We were then called up by Mr. Arbuthnot at a lit after 3 a.m.," proceeded witness, " and went down to t

servatory, where I saw the accused and Mr. Arbuth-
washing the face of the deceased. I pointed out
hem what an unwise thing it was to do this, as they
ht be destroying valuable evidence for the police.
ey paid no attention to me. There were a number
ootmarks round about the door which I wanted to
mine, because it was my theory that——"

My lords," cried Sir Impey, " we really cannot
e this witness's theory."

Certainly not!" said the Lord High Steward.
nswer the questions, please, and don't add anything
your own account."

Of course," said Mr. Pettigrew-Robinson. " I don't
an to imply that there was anything wrong about it,
I considered——"

Never mind what you considered. Attend to me,
ase. When you first saw the body, how was it lying?"

On its back, with Denver and Arbuthnot washing
ace. It had evidently been turned over, because——"

Sir Wigmore," interposed the Lord High Steward,
ou really must control your witness."

Kindly confine yourself to the evidence," said
Wigmore, rather heated. " We do not want your
uctions from it. You say that when you saw the
y it was lying on its back. Is that correct?"

And Denver and Arbuthnot were washing it."

Yes. Now I want to pass to another point. Do
remember an occasion when you lunched at the
al Automobile Club?"

I do. I lunched there one day in the middle of
August—I think it was about the sixteenth or
nteenth."

Will you tell us what happened on that occasion?"

I had gone into the smoke-room after lunch, and
reading in a high-backed armchair, when I saw
prisoner at the Bar come in with the late Captain
icart. That is to say, I saw them in the big mirror
the mantelpiece. They did not notice there was

anyone there, or they would have been a little mor careful what they said, I fancy. They sat down nea me and started talking, and presently Cathcart leane over and said something in a low tone which I couldn' catch. The prisoner leapt up with a horrified face exclaiming, 'For God's sake, don't give me away Cathcart—there'd be the devil to pay.' Cathcart sai something reassuring—I didn't hear what, he had furtive sort of voice—and the prisoner replied, "Wel don't, that's all. I couldn't afford to let anybody ge hold of it.' The prisoner seemed greatly alarmed Captain Cathcart was laughing. They dropped the voices again, and that was all I heard."

"Thank you."

Sir Impey took over the witness with a Belial-lik politeness.

"You are gifted with very excellent powers of ob servation and deduction, Mr. Pettigrew-Robinson," h began, "and no doubt you like to exercise your sym pathetic imagination in a scrutiny of people's motiv and characters?"

"I think I may call myself a student of huma nature," replied Mr. Pettigrew-Robinson, much moll fied.

"Doubtless, people are inclined to confide in you?

"Certainly. I may say I am a great repository human documents."

"On the night of Captain Cathcart's death your wi knowledge of the world was doubtless of great comfo and assistance to the family?"

"They did not avail themselves of my experienc sir," said Mr. Pettigrew-Robinson, exploding sudden "I was ignored completely. If only my advice h been taken at the time——"

"Thank you, thank you," said Sir Impey, cutti short an impatient exclamation from the Attorne General, who thereupon rose and demanded:

"If Captain Cathcart had had any secret or troul

any kind in his life, you would have expected him to
you about it ? "

'From any right-minded young man I might cer-
ıly have expected it," said Mr. Pettigrew-Robinson
steringly ; " but Captain Cathcart was disagreeably
retive. On the only occasion when I showed a
:ndly interest in his affairs he was very rude indeed.
called me——"

' That'll do," interposed Sir Impey hastily, the
wer to the question not having turned out as he
›ected. " What the deceased called you is im-
terial."

Mr. Pettigrew-Robinson retired, leaving behind him
impression of a man with a grudge—an impression
ich seemed to please Mr. Glibbery and Mr. Brown-
ɜ-Fortescue extremely, for they chuckled continu-
ly through the evidence of the next two witnesses.
Mrs. Pettigrew-Robinson had little to add to her
vious evidence at the inquest. Miss Cathcart was
ed by Sir Impey about Cathcart's parentage, and
lained, with deep disapproval in her voice, that
brother, when an all-too-experienced and middle-
d man of the world, had nevertheless " been en-
gled by " an Italian singer of nineteen, who had
ontrived " to make him marry her. Eighteen years
r both parents had died. " No wonder," said
ss Cathcart, " with the rackety life they led," and the
had been left to her care. She explained how Denis
always chafed at her influence, gone about with
ı she disapproved of, and eventually gone to Paris
nake a diplomatic career for himself, since which
e she had hardly seen him.

.n interesting point was raised in the cross-examina-
of Inspector Craikes. A penknife being shown
, he identified it as the one found on Cathcart's
y.

y Mr. Glibbery : " Do you observe any marks on
blade ? "

" Yes, there is a slight notch near the handle."

" Might the mark have been caused by forcing back the catch of a window ? "

Inspector Craikes agreed that it might, but doubted whether so small a knife would have been adequate for such a purpose. The revolver was produced, and the question of ownership raised.

" My lords," put in Sir Impey, " we do not dispute the Duke's ownership of the revolver."

The Court looked surprised, and, after Hardraw the gamekeeper had given evidence of the shot heard at 11.30, the medical evidence was taken.

Sir Impey Biggs : " Could the wound have been self-inflicted ? "

" It could, certainly."

" Would it have been instantly fatal ? "

" No. From the amount of blood found upon the path it was obviously not immediately fatal."

" Are the marks found, in your opinion, consistent with deceased having crawled towards the house ? "

" Yes, quite. He might have had sufficient strength to do so."

" Would such a wound cause fever ? "

" It is quite possible. He might have lost consciousness for some time, and contracted a chill and fever by lying in the wet."

" Are the appearances consistent with his having lived for some hours after being wounded ? "

" They strongly suggest it."

Re-examining, Sir Wigmore Wrinching established that the wound and general appearance of the ground were equally consistent with the theory that deceased had been shot by another hand at very close quarters and dragged to the house before life was extinct.

" In your experience is it more usual for a person committing suicide to shoot himself in the chest or in the head ? "

" In the head is perhaps more usual."

So much as almost to create a presumption of
rder when the wound is in the chest ? "
I would not go so far as that."
But, other things being equal, you would say that
ound in the head is more suggestive of suicide than
ody-wound ? "
That is so."
ir Impey Biggs : " But suicide by shooting in the
t is not by any means impossible ? "
Oh, dear, no."
There have been such cases ? "
Oh, certainly ; many such."
There is nothing in the medical evidence before you
xclude the idea of suicide ? "
Nothing whatever."
his closed the case for the Crown.

CHAPTER XV

BAR FALLING

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WHEN Sir Impey Biggs rose to make his openi speech for the defence on the second day, it was c served that he looked somewhat worried—a thing ve unusual in him. His remarks were very brief, yet those few words he sent a thrill through the gr assembly.

"My lords, in rising to open this defence I fi myself in a more than usually anxious position. N that I have any doubt of your lordships' verdict. Ne perhaps has it been possible so clearly to prove t innocence of any accused person as in the case of noble client. But I will explain to your lordships at o that I may be obliged to ask for an adjournment, since are at present without an important witness and a de sive piece of evidence. My lords, I hold here in hand a cablegram from this witness—I will tell you name; it is Lord Peter Wimsey, the brother of accused. It was handed in yesterday at New York. will read it to you. He says: 'Evidence secured. Le ing to-night with Air Pilot Grant. Sworn copy depositions follow by S.S. *Lucarnia* in case accide Hope arrive Thursday.' My lords, at this moment t all-important witness is cleaving the air high above wide Atlantic. In this wintry weather he is bravin peril which would appal any heart but his own and t of the world-famous aviator whose help he has enlist so that no moment may be lost in freeing his no

other from this terrible charge. My lords, the baro-ter is falling."

An immense hush, like the stillness of a black frost, d fallen over the glittering benches. The lords in ir scarlet and ermine, the peeresses in their rich s, counsel in their full-bottomed wigs and billowing wns, the Lord High Steward upon his high seat, ushers and the heralds and the gaudy kings-of ns, rested rigid in their places. Only the prisoner ked across at his counsel and back to the Lord High ward in a kind of bewilderment, and the reporters ibbled wildly and desperately stop-press announce-nts—lurid headlines, picturesque epithets, and alarm-weather predictions, to halt hurrying London on its y: "PEER'S SON FLIES ATLANTIC"; "BROTHER'S VOTION"; "WILL WIMSEY BE IN TIME?"; IDDLESDALE MURDER CHARGE: AMAZING DEVELOP-NT." This was news. A million tape-machines ed it out in offices and clubs, where clerks and ssenger-boys gloated over it and laid wagers on the ult; the thousands of monster printing-presses sucked n, boiled it into lead, champed it into slugs, engulfed n their huge maws, digested it to paper, and flapped orth again with clutching talons; and a blue-nosed, ged veteran of Vimy Ridge, who had once assisted to Major Wimsey out of a shell-hole, muttered: "Gawd 'im, 'e's a real decent little blighter," as he tucked newspapers into the iron grille of a tree in Kingsway displayed his placard to the best advantage.

After a brief statement that he intended, not merely prove his noble client's innocence but (as a work supererogation) to make clear every detail of the edy, Sir Impey Biggs proceeded without further ay to call his witnesses.

Among the first was Mr. Goyles, who testified that had found Cathcart already dead at 3 a.m., with head close to the water-trough which stood near well. Ellen, the maid-servant, next confirmed

James Fleming's evidence with regard to the post-bag and explained how she changed the blotting-paper i the study every day.

The evidence of Detective-Inspector Parker arouse more interest and some bewilderment. His descriptio of the discovery of the green-eyed cat was eagerl listened to. He also gave a minute account of the foot prints and marks of dragging, especially the imprint of hand in the flower-bed. The piece of blotting-pape was then produced, and photographs of it circulate among the peers. A long discussion ensued on bot these points, Sir Impey Biggs endeavouring to show tha the imprint on the flower-bed was such as would hav been caused by a man endeavouring to lift himse from a prone position, Sir Wigmore Wrinching doin his best to force an admission that it might have bee made by deceased in trying to prevent himself from bein dragged along.

" The position of the fingers being towards the hou appears, does it not, to negative the suggestion dragging ? " suggested Sir Impey.

Sir Wigmore, however, put it to the witness th the wounded man might have been dragged hea foremost.

" If, now," said Sir Wigmore. " I were to drag yo by the coat-collar—my lords will grasp my conte tion——"

" It appears," observed the Lord High Steward, " be a case for *solvitur ambulando*." (Laughter.) " suggest that when the House rises for lunch, some of should make the experiment, choosing a member similar height and weight to the deceased." (All th noble lords looked round at one another to see whi unfortunate might be chosen for the part.)

Inspector Parker then mentioned the marks of forci on the study window.

" In your opinion, could the catch have been forc back by the knife found on the body of the deceased ?

' I know it could, for I made the experiment myself
:h a knife of exactly similar pattern."
After this the message on the blotting-paper was read
:kwards and forwards and interpreted in every possible
y, the defence insisting that the language was French
l the words "*Je suis fou de douleur*," the prosecution
uting the suggestion as far-fetched, and offering an
glish interpretation, such as " is found " or " his foul."
handwriting expert was then called, who compared
: handwriting with that of an authentic letter of Cath-
t's, and was subsequently severely handled by the
)secution.
These knotty points being left for the consideration
the noble lords, the defence then called a tedious
ies of witnesses : the manager of Cox's and Monsieur
rgeot of the Crédit Lyonnais, who went with much
ail into Cathcart's financial affairs ; the concierge
l Madame Leblanc from the Rue St. Honoré ; and
: noble lords began to yawn, with the exception of a
v of the soap and pickles lords, who suddenly started
nake computations in their note-books, and exchanged
ks of intelligence as from one financier to another.
Then came Monsieur Briquet, the jeweller from the
e de la Paix, and the girl from his shop, who told
story of the tall, fair, foreign lady and the purchase
the green-eyed cat—whereat everybody woke up.
:er reminding the assembly that this incident took
:e in February, when Cathcart's fiancée was in Paris,
Impey invited the jeweller's assistant to look round
house and tell them if she saw the foreign lady. This
)ved a lengthy business, but the answer was finally in
: negative.
" I do not want there to be any doubt about this,"
l Sir Impey, " and, with the learned Attorney-
neral's permission, I am now going to confront this
ness with Lady Mary Wimsey."
Lady Mary was accordingly placed before the witness,
)o replied immediately and positively : " No, this is

not the lady ; I have never seen this lady in my life. There is the resemblance of height and colour and the hair bobbed, but there is nothing else at all—not the least in the world. It is not the same type at all. Mademoiselle is a charming English lady, and the man who marries her will be very happy, but the other was *belle à se suicider*—a woman to kill, suicide one's self, or send all to the devil for, and believe me, gentlemen " (with a wide smile to her distinguished audience), " we have the opportunity to see them in my business."

There was a profound sensation as this witness took her departure, and Sir Impey scribbled a note and passed it down to Mr. Murbles. It contained the one word, " Magnificent ! " Mr. Murbles scribbled back " Never said a word to her. Can you beat it ? " and leaned back in his seat smirking like a very neat little grotesque from a Gothic corbel.

The witness who followed was Professor Hébert, a distinguished exponent of international law, who described Cathcart's promising career as a rising young diplomat in Paris before the war. He was followed by a number of officers who testified to the excellent war record of the deceased. Then came a witness who gave the aristocratic name of du Bois-Gobey Houdin, who perfectly recollected a very uncomfortable dispute on a certain occasion when playing cards with le Capitain Cathcart, and having subsequently mentioned the matter to Monsieur Thomas Freeborn, the distinguished English engineer. It was Parker's diligence that had unearthed this witness, and he looked across with an undisguised grin at the discomfited Sir Wigmore Wrinching. When Mr. Glibbery had dealt with all these the afternoon was well advanced, and the Lord High Steward accordingly asked the lords if it was their pleasure that the House be adjourned till the next day at 10.30 of the clock in the forenoon, and the lords replying " Aye " in a most exemplary chorus, the House was accordingly adjourned.

A scurry of swift black clouds with ragged edges was
ving bleakly westward as they streamed out into
rliament Square, and the seagulls screeched and
eeled inwards from the river. Charles Parker wrapped
ancient Burberry closely about him as he scrambled
to a 'bus to get home to Great Ormond Street. It
s only one more drop in his cup of discomfort that
conductor greeted him with " Outside only ! " and
ıg the bell before he could get off again. He climbed
the top and sat there holding his hat on. Mr. Bun-
returned sadly to 110 Piccadilly, and wandered
tlessly about the flat till seven o'clock, when he came
o the sitting-room and switched on the loud speaker.
' London calling," said the unseen voice impartially.
LO calling. Here is the weather forecast. A deep
ɔression is crossing the Atlantic, and a secondary is
tionary over the British Isles. Storms, with heavy
ɲ and sleet, will be prevalent, rising to a gale in the
th and south-west. . . ."
" You never know," said Bunter. " I suppose I'd
ter light a fire in his bedroom."
" Further outlook similar."

CHAPTER XVI

THE SECOND STRING

O, whan he came to broken briggs
He bent his bow and swam,
And whan he came to the green grass growin'
He slacked his shoone and ran.

O, whan he came to Lord William's gates
He baed na to chap na ca',
But set his bent bow till his breast,
An' lightly lap the wa'.

—Ballad of Lady Maisry.

LORD PETER peered out through the cold scurry c
cloud. The thin struts of steel, incredibly fragile, swun
slowly across the gleam and glint far below, where th
wide country dizzied out and spread like a revolving ma
In front the sleek leather back of his companion humpe
stubbornly, sheeted with rain. He hoped that Gra
was feeling confident. The roar of the engine drowne
the occasional shout he threw to his passenger as the
lurched from gust to gust.

He withdrew his mind from present discomforts an
went over that last, strange, hurried scene. Fragmen
of conversation spun through his head.

"Mademoiselle, I have scoured two continents
search of you."

"*Voyons*, then, it is urgent. But be quick for th
big bear may come in and be grumpy, and I do n
like *des histoires*."

There had been a lamp on a low table ; he remem-ed the gleam through the haze of short gold hair. e was a tall girl, but slender, looking up at him from huge black-and-gold cushions.

" Mademoiselle, it is incredible to me that you should r—dine or dance—with a person called Van Humper-ck."

Now what had possessed him to say that—when re was so little time, and Jerry's affairs were of such portance ?

" Monsieur van Humperdinck does not dance. Did u seek me through two continents to say that ? "

" No, I am serious."

" *Eh bien*, sit down."

She had been quite frank about it.

" Yes, poor soul. But life was very expensive since war. I refused several good things. But always *histoires*. And so little money. You see, one must sensible. There is one's old age. It is necessary to provident, *hein ?* "

Assuredly." She had a little accent—very familiar. first he could not place it. Then it came to him—nna before the war, that capital of incredible follies.

Yes, yes, I wrote. I was very kind, very sensible. aid, ' *Je ne suis pas femme à supporter de gros ennuis*.' *a se comprend, n'est-ce pas ?* "

That was readily understood. The 'plane dived ly into a sudden pocket, the propeller whirring blessly in the void, then steadied and began to nose the opposite spiral.

I saw it in the papers—yes. Poor boy ! Why uld anybody have shot him ? "

Mademoiselle, it is for that I have come to you. My ther, whom I dearly love, is accused of the murder. may be hanged."

Brr ! "

For a murder he did not commit."

Mon pauvre enfant——"

" Mademoiselle, I implore you to be serious. My brother is accused, and will be standing his trial——"

Once her attention had been caught she had been all sympathy. Her blue eyes had a curious and attractive trick—a full lower lid that shut them into glimmering slits.

" Mademoiselle, I implore you, try to remember what was in his letter."

' But, *mon pauvre ami*, how can I ? I did not read it. It was very long, very tedious, full of *histoires*. The thing was finished—I never bother about what cannot be helped, do you ? "

But his real agony at this failure had touched her.

" Listen, then ; all is perhaps not lost. It is possible the letter is still somewhere about. Or we will ask Adèle. She is my maid. She collects letters to blackmail people—oh, yes, I know ! But she is *habile comme tout pour la toilette*. Wait—we will look first."

Tossing out letters, trinkets, endless perfumed rubbish from the little gimcrack secretaire, from drawers full of lingerie (" I am so untidy—I am Adèle's despair") from bags—hundreds of bags—and at last Adèle, thin lipped and wary-eyed, denying everything till her mistress suddenly slapped her face in a fury, and called her ugly little names in French and German.

" It is useless, then," said Lord Peter. " What a pity that Mademoiselle Adèle cannot find a thing so valuable to me."

The word " valuable " suggested an idea to Adèle. There was Mademoiselle's jewel-case which had not been searched. She would fetch it.

" *C'est cela que cherche monsieur ?* "

After that the sudden arrival of Mr. Cornelius van Humperdinck, very rich and stout and suspicious, and the rewarding of Adèle in a tactful, unobtrusive fashion by the elevator shaft.

Grant shouted, but the words flipped feebly away

the blackness and were lost. "What ? " bawled
ısey in his ear. He shouted again, and this time the
d "juice" shot into sound and fluttered away.
whether the news was good or bad Lord Peter
d not tell.

. . . . .

r. Murbles was aroused a little after midnight by
ınderous knocking upon his door. Thrusting his
out of the window in some alarm, he saw the porter
his lantern steaming through the rain, and behind
a shapeless figure which for the moment Mr.
bles could not make out.
What's the matter ? " said the solicitor.
Young lady askin' urgently for you, sir."
he shapeless figure looked up, and he caught the
gle of gold hair in the lantern-light under the little
hat.
Mr. Murbles, please come. Bunter rang me up.
re's a woman come to give evidence. Bunter doesn't
to leave her—she's frightened—but he says it's
tfully important, and Bunter's always right, you
v."
Did he mention the name ? "
A Mrs. Grimethorpe."
God bless me! Just a moment, my dear young lady,
I will let you in."
ıd, indeed, more quickly than might have been
cted, Mr. Murbles made his appearance in a Jaeger
ıing-gown at the front door.
Come in, my dear. I will get dressed in a very few
ıtes. It was quite right of you to come to me. I'm
, very glad you did. What a terrible night ! Perkins,
ld you kindly wake up Mr. Murphy and ask him
)lige me with the use of his telephone ? "
r. Murphy—a noisy Irish barrister with a hearty
mer—needed no waking. He was entertaining a
y of friends, and was delighted to be of service.

"Is that you Biggs? Murbles speaking. T
alibi——"

"Yes?"

"Has come along of its own accord."

"My God! You don't say so!"

"Can you come round to 110 Piccadilly?"

"Straight away."

It was a strange little party gathered round L
Peter's fire—the white-faced woman, who started
every sound; the men of law, with their keen, disc
lined faces; Lady Mary; Bunter, the efficient. M
Grimethorpe's story was simple enough. She
suffered the torments of knowledge ever since L
Peter had spoken to her. She had seized an hour w
her husband was drunk in the "Lord in Glory," a
had harnessed the horse and driven in to Stapley.

"I couldn't keep silence. It's better my man sho
kill me, for I'm unhappy enough, and maybe I coul
be any worse off in the Lord's hand—rather than t
should hang him for a thing he never done. He
kind, and I was desperate miserable, that's the tr
and I'm hoping his lady won't be hard on him when
knows it all."

"No, no," said Mr. Murbles, clearing his thr
"Excuse me a moment, madam. Sir Impey——"

The lawyers whispered together in the wind
seat.

"You see," said Sir Impey, "she has burnt
boats pretty well now by coming at all. The great qu
tion for us is, Is it worth the risk? After all, we d
know what Wimsey's evidence amounts to."

"No, that is why I feel inclined—in spite of
risk—to put this evidence in," said Mr. Murbles.

"I am ready to take the risk," interposed M
Grimethorpe starkly.

"We quite appreciate that," replied Sir Imp
"It is the risk to our client we have to consider
of all."

Risk ? " cried Mary. " But surely this clears him ! "

Will you swear absolutely to the time when his of Denver arrived at Grider's Hole, Mrs. Grime-e ? " went on the lawyer, as though he had not l her.

t was a quarter past twelve by the kitchen clock— very good clock."

And he left you at——"

About five minutes past two."

And how long would it take a man, walking quickly, t back to Riddlesdale Lodge ? "

Oh, wellnigh an hour. It's rough walking, and ep bank up and down to the beck."

You mustn't let the other counsel upset you on points, Mrs. Grimethorpe, because they will try ove that he had time to kill Cathcart either before arted or after he returned, and by admitting that Duke had something in his life that he wanted kept t we shall be supplying the very thing the prose-n lack—*a motive for murdering anyone who might found him out*."

ere was a stricken silence.

f I may ask, madam," said Sir Impey, " has any n any suspicion ? "

My husband guessed," she answered hoarsely. " I ure of it. He has always known. But he couldn't e it. That very night——"

What night ? "

The night of the murder—he laid a trap for me. ame back from Stapley in the night, hoping to us and do murder. But he drank too much before arted, and spent the night in the ditch, or it might erald's death you'd be inquiring into, and mine, as as the other."

gave Mary an odd shock to hear her brother's name n like that, by that speaker and in that company. asked suddenly, apropos of nothing, " Isn't Mr. r here ? "

"No, my dear," said Mr. Murbles reprovin
"this is not a police matter."

"The best thing we can do, I think," said Sir Imp
"is to put in the evidence, and, if necessary, arra
for some kind of protection for this lady. In the me
time——"

"She is coming round with me to mother," said L
Mary determinedly.

"My dear lady," expostulated Mr. Murbles, "
would be very unsuitable in the circumstances. I th
you hardly grasp——"

"Mother said so," retorted her ladyship. "Bun
call a taxi."

Mr. Murbles waved his hands helplessly, but
Impey was rather amused. "It's no good, Murbl
he said. "Time and trouble will tame an advan
young woman, but an advanced old woman is unc
trollable by any earthly force."

So it was from the Dowager's town house that L
Mary rang up Mr. Charles Parker to tell him the ne

CHAPTER XVII

THE ELOQUENT DEAD

connaissais Manon : pourquoi m'affliger tant d'un eur que j'avais dû prévoir.—Manon Lescaut.

E gale had blown itself out into a wonderful fresh with clear spaces of sky, and a high wind rolling ders of cumulus down the blue slopes of air.

he prisoner had been wrangling for an hour with advisers when finally they came into court, and Sir Impey's classical face showed flushed between wings of his wig.

I'm not going to say anything," said the Duke ob- tely. " Rotten thing to do. I suppose I can't ent you callin' her if she insists on comin'—damn' l of her—makes me feel no end of a beast."

Better leave it at that," said Mr. Murbles. " Makes od impression, you know. Let him go into the box behave like a perfect gentleman. They'll like it."

r Impey, who had sat through the small hours alter- is speech, nodded.

he first witness that day came as something of a rise. She gave her name and address as Eliza gs, known as Madame Brigette of New Bond Street, her occupation as beauty specialist and perfumer. had a large and aristocratic clientele of both sexes, a branch in Paris.

eceased had been a client of hers in both cities for ral years. He had massage and manicure. After war he had come to her about some slight scars ed by grazing with shrapnel. He was extremely

particular about his personal appearance, and, if y called that vanity in a man, you might certainly s he was vain. Thank you. Sir Wigmore Wrinchi made no attempt to cross-examine the witness, and t noble lords wondered to one another what it was about.

At this point Sir Impey Biggs leaned forward, a tapping his brief impressively with his forefinger, beg

"My lords, so strong is our case that we had thought it necessary to present an alibi——" when officer of the court rushed up from a little whirlpool commotion by the door and excitedly thrust a note i his hand. Sir Impey read, coloured, glanced down hall, put down his brief, folded his hands over it, a said in a sudden, loud voice which penetrated even the deaf ear of the Duke of Wiltshire :

"My lords, I am happy to say that our missing w ness is here. I call Lord Peter Wimsey."

Every neck was at once craned, and every eye focus on the very grubby and oily figure that came amia trotting up the long room. Sir Impey Biggs passed t note down to Mr. Murbles, and, turning to the witne who was yawning frightfully in the intervals of grinn at all his acquaintances, demanded that he should sworn.

The witness's story was as follows :

"I am Lord Peter Wimsey, brother of the accus I live at 110 Piccadilly. In consequence of wha read on that bit of blotting-paper which I now identi I went to Paris to look for a certain lady. The na of the lady is Mademoiselle Simone Vonderaa. I fou she had left Paris in company with a man named V Humperdinck. I followed her, and at length came with her in New York. I asked her to give me letter Cathcart wrote on the night of his death. (S sation). I produce that letter, with Mademois Vonderaa's signature on the corner, so that it can identified if Wiggy there tries to put it over you. (Joy

tion, in which the indignant protests of prosecut-
ounsel were drowned.) And I'm sorry I've given
uch short notice of this, old man, but I only got it
ay before yesterday. We came as quick as we could,
e had to come down near Whitehaven with engine
le, and if we had come down half a mile sooner
uldn't be here now." (Applause, hurriedly checked
e Lord High Steward.)

My lords," said Sir Impey, " your lordships are
sses that I have never seen this letter in my life
e. I have no idea of its contents ; yet so positive
that it cannot but assist my noble client's case,
I am willing—nay, eager—to put in this document
diately, as it stands, without perusal, to stand or
y the contents."

The handwriting must be identified as that of the
sed," interposed the Lord High Steward.

ie ravening pencils of the reporters tore along the
. The lean young man who worked for the *Daily*
pet scented a scandal in high life and licked his
never knowing what a much bigger one had escaped
by a bare minute or so.

ss Lydia Cathcart was recalled to identify the hand-
ng, and the letter was handed to the Lord High
ard, who announced :

The letter is in French. We shall have to swear
terpreter."

You will find," said the witness suddenly, " that
bits of words on the blotting-paper come out of
etter. You'll 'scuse my mentioning it."

Is this person put forward as an expert witness ?"
ired Sir Wigmore witheringly.

Right ho ! " said Lord Peter. " Only, you see, it
been rather sprung on Biggy as you might say.

" Biggy and Wiggy
Were two pretty men,
They went into court
When the clock——"

"Sir Impey, I must really ask you to keep yo witness in order."

Lord Peter grinned, and a pause ensued while a interpreter was fetched and sworn. Then, at last, t letter was read, amid a breathless silence:

"Riddlesdale Lodge,
"Stapley,
"N.E. Yorks.
"*le* 13 *Octobre*, 192

"SIMONE,—Je viens de recevoir ta lettre. Q dire? Inutiles, les prières ou les reproches. Tu comprendras—tu ne liras même pas.

"N'ai-je pas toujours su, d'ailleurs, que tu dev infailliblement me trahir? Depuis huit ans d je souffre tous les torments que puisse infliger jalousie. Je comprends bien que tu n'as jam voulu me faire de la peine. C'est tout justeme cette insouciance, cette légèreté, cette façon sédu ante d'être malhonnête, que j'adorais en toi. J tout su, et je t'ai aimée.

"Ma foi, non, ma chère, jamais je n'ai eu moindre illusion. Te rappelles-tu cette premi rencontre, un soir au Casino? Tu avais dix-se ans, et tu étais jolie à ravir. Le lendemain tu à moi. Tu m'as dit, si gentiment, que tu m'aim bien, et que j'étais, moi, le premier. Ma pauv enfant, tu en as menti. Tu riais, toute seule, de naiveté—il y avait bien de quoi rire! Dès no premier baiser, j'ai prévu ce moment.

"Mais écoute, Simone. J'ai la faiblesse de voul te montrer exactement ce que tu as fait de moi. regretteras peut-être en peu. Mais, non—si tu pouv regretter quoi que ce fût, tu ne serais plus Simone.

"Il y a huit ans, la veille de la guerre, j'étais riche moins riche que ton Américain, mais assez riche po te donner l'établissement qu'il te fallait. Tu ét

ıs exigeante avant la guerre, Simone—qui est-ce pendant mon absence, t'a enseigné le goût du ? Charmante discrétion de ma part de ne jamais demander ! Eh bien, une grande partie de ma ine se trouvant placée en Russie et en Allemagne, ai perdu plus des trois-quarts. Ce que m'en ait en France a beaucoup diminué en valeur. Il vrai que j'avais mon traitement de capitaine dans née britannique, mais c'est peu de chose, tu

Avant même la fin de la guerre, tu m'avais gé toutes mes économies. C'était idiot, quoi ? Un e homme qui a perdu les trois-quarts de ses rentes e permet plus une maîtresse et un appartement nue Kléber. Ou il congédie madame, ou bien il demande quelques sacrifices. Je n'ai rien osé ander. Si j'étais venu un jour te dire, ' Simone, ıis pauvre '—que m'aurais-tu répondu ?

Sais-tu ce que j'ai fait ? Non—tu n'as jamais sé à demander d'où venait cet argent. Qu'est-ce cela pouvait te faire que j'ai tout jeté—fortune, neur, bonheur—pour te posséder ? J'ai joué, spérément, éperdument—j'ai fait pis : j'ai triché eu. Je te vois hausser les épaules—tu ris—tu ' Tiens, c'est malin, ça ! ' Oui, mais cela ne ait pas. On m'aurait chassé du régiment. Je enais le dernier des hommes.

D'ailleurs, cela ne pouvait durer. Déjà un soir à s on m'a fait une scène désagréable, bien qu'on rien pu prouver. C'est alors que je me suis é avec cette demoiselle dont je t'ai parlé, la du duc anglais. Le beau projet, quoi ! Entre- r ma maîtresse avec l'argent de ma femme ! Et 'aurais fait—et je le ferais encore demain, si ait pour te reposséder.

Mais tu me quittes. Cet Américain est riche— i-riche. Depuis longtemps tu me répètes que appartement est trop petit et que tu t'ennuies ourir. Cet ' ami bienveillant ' t'offre les autos,

les diamants, les mille-et-une nuits, la lune ! Au
de ces merveilles, évidemment, que valent l'am
et l'honneur ?

" Enfin, le bon duc est d'une stupidité très c
mode. Il laisse traîner son révolver dans le ti
de son bureau. D'ailleurs, il vient de me dema
une explication à propos de cette histoire de ca
Tu vois qu'en tout cas la partie était finie. Pourc
t'en vouloir ? On mettra sans doute mon sui
au compte de cet exposé. Tant mieux, je ne v
pas qu'on affiche mon histoire amoureuse dans
journaux.

" Adieu, ma bien-aimée—mon adorée, mon ado
ma Simone. Sois heureuse avec ton nouvel am
Ne pense plus à moi. Qu'est-ce tout cela peut
te faire ? Mon Dieu, comme je t'ai aimée—con
je t'aime toujours, malgré moi. Mais c'en est
Jamais plus tu ne me perceras le cœur. Oh ! J'en
—je suis fou de douleur ! Adieu.

" DENIS CATHCART."

TRANSLATION

" SIMONE,—I have just got your letter. What am I to say ?
useless to entreat or reproach you. You would not understan
even read the letter.

" Besides, I always knew you must betray me some day. I
suffered a hell of jealousy for the last eight years. I know per
well you never meant to hurt me. It was just your utter lightnes
carelessness and your attractive way of being dishonest which w
adorable. I knew everything, and loved you all the same.

" Oh, no, my dear, I never had any illusions. You remembe
first meeting that night at the Casino. You were seventeen, and
breakingly lovely. You came to me the very next day. You tol
very prettily, that you loved me and that I was the first. My
little girl, that wasn't true. I expect, when you were alone
laughed to think I was so easily taken in. But there was nothi
laugh at. From our very first kiss I foresaw this moment.

" I'm afraid I'm weak enough, though, to want to tell you just
you have done for me. You may be sorry. But no—if you could
anything, you wouldn't be Simone any longer.

" Eight years ago, before the war, I was rich—not so rich as
new American, but rich enough to give you what you wanted.
didn't want quite so much before the war, Simone. Who taugh

so extravagant while I was away ? I think it was very nice of me
r to ask you. Well, most of my money was in Russian and Ger-
securities, and more than three-quarters of it went west. The
inder in France went down considerably in value. I had my
in's pay, of course, but that didn't amount to much. Even before
nd of the war you had managed to get through all my savings.
ourse, I was a fool. A young man whose income has been reduced
ree-quarters can't afford an expensive mistress and a flat in the
ue Kléber. He ought either to dismiss the lady or to demand a
self-sacrifice. But I didn't dare demand anything. Suppose I
come to you one day and said, ' Simone, I've lost my money '—
would you have said to me ?
What do you think I did ? I don't suppose you ever thought
t it at all. You didn't care if I was chucking away my money and
onour and my happiness to keep you. I gambled desperately. I
vorse, I cheated at cards. I can see you shrug your shoulders
say, ' Good for you ! ' But it's a rotten thing to do—a rotter's
. If anybody had found out they'd have cashiered me.
Besides, it couldn't go on for ever. There was one row in Paris,
gh they couldn't prove anything. So then I got engaged to the
ish girl I told you about—the duke's daughter. Pretty, wasn't it ?
ually brought myself to consider keeping my mistress on my wife's
y ! But I'd have done it, and I'd do it again, to get you back.
And now you've chucked me. This American is colossally rich.
long time you've been dinning into my ears that the flat is too
and that you're bored to death. Your ' good friend ' can offer
ars, diamonds—Aladdin's palace—the moon ! I admit that love
nonour look pretty small by comparison.
Ah, well, the Duke is most obligingly stupid. He leaves his
ver about in his desk drawer. Besides, he's just been in to ask
about this card-sharping story. So you see the game's up, any-
I don't blame you. I suppose they'll put my suicide down to
of exposure. All the better. I don't want my love-affairs in the
ay Press.
Good-bye, my dear—oh, Simone, my darling, my darling, good-
Be happy with your new lover. Never mind me—what does it
atter ? My God—how I loved you, and how I still love you in
of myself. It's all done with. You'll never break my heart
. I'm mad—mad with misery ! Good-bye."

CHAPTER XVIII

THE SPEECH FOR THE DEFENCE

"*Nobody ; I myself ; farewell*"—Othello.

AFTER the reading of Cathcart's letter even the appea ance of the prisoner in the witness-box came as a anti-climax. In the face of the Attorney-General cross-examination he maintained stoutly that he ha wandered on the moor for several hours without mee ing anybody, though he was forced to admit that he ha gone downstairs at 11.30, and not at 2.30, as he ha stated at the inquest. Sir Wigmore Wrinching made great point of this, and, in a spirited endeavour to su gest that Cathcart was blackmailing Denver, presse his questions so hard that Sir Impey Biggs, Mr. Murble Lady Mary, and Bunter had a nervous feeling th learned counsel's eyes were boring through the wal to the side-room where, apart from the other witnesse Mrs. Grimethorpe sat waiting. After lunch Sir Impe Biggs rose to make his plea for the defence.

"My lords,—Your lordships have now heard—ar I, who have watched and pleaded here for these thr anxious days, know with what eager interest and wi what ready sympathy you have heard—the eviden brought by my noble client to defend him against th dreadful charge of murder. You have listened whi as it were from his narrow grave, the dead man h lifted his voice to tell you the story of that fatal nig of the thirteenth of October, and I feel sure you c

no doubt in your hearts that that story is the one. As your lordships know, I was myself totally rant of the contents of that letter until I heard it in Court just now, and, by the profound impression ade upon my own mind, I can judge how tremenly and how painfully it must have affected your ships. In my long experience at the criminal bar, I x I have never met with a history more melancholy that of the unhappy young man whom a fatal on—for here indeed we may use that well-worn ession in all the fulness of its significance—whom ly fatal passion thus urged into deep after deep of adation, and finally to a violent death by his own l.

The noble peer at the Bar has been indicted before lordships of the murder of this young man. That wholly innocent of the charge must, in the light of we have heard, be so plain to your lordships that words from me might seem altogether superfluous. ie majority of cases of this kind the evidence is con-l, contradictory; here, however, the course of ts is so clear, so coherent, that had we ourselves been nt to see the drama unrolled before us, as before the eing eye of God, we could hardly have a more vivid nore accurate vision of that night's adventures. In-, had the death of Denis Cathcart been the sole t of the night, I will venture to say that the truth could have been one single moment in doubt. Since, ver, by a series of unheard-of coincidences, the ds of Denis Cathcart's story became entangled with any others, I will venture to tell it once again from eginning, lest, in the confusion of so great a cloud tnesses, any point should still remain obscure.

Let me, then, go back to the beginning. You have l how Denis Cathcart was born of mixed parentage m the union of a young and lovely southern girl an Englishman twenty years older than herself: rious, passionate, and cynical. Till the age of 18

he lives on the Continent with his parents, travelli
from place to place, seeing more of the world even th
the average young Frenchman of his age, learning t
code of love in a country where the *crime passionel*
understood and forgiven as it never can be over here.

" At the age of 18 a terrible loss befalls him. In
very short space of time he loses both his parents
his beautiful and adored mother and his father, w
might, had he lived, have understood how to gui
the impetuous nature which he had brought into t
world. But the father dies, expressing two last wish
both of which, natural as they were, turned out in t
circumstances to be disastrously ill-advised. He left h
son to the care of his sister, whom he had not seen f
many years, with the direction that the boy should
sent to his own old University.

" My lords, you have seen Miss Lydia Cathcart, a
heard her evidence. You will have realised how u
rightly, how conscientiously, with what Christian d
regard of self, she performed the duty entrusted to h
and yet how inevitably she failed to establish any r
sympathy between herself and her young ward. H
poor lad, missing his parents at every turn, was plung
at Cambridge into the society of young men of tota
different upbringing from himself. To a young man
his cosmopolitan experience the youth of Cambrid
with its sports and rags and naïve excursions into phi
sophy o' nights, must have seemed unbelievably childi
You all, from your own recollections of your Al
Mater, can reconstruct Denis Cathcart's life at Ca
bridge, its outward gaiety, its inner emptiness.

" Ambitious of embracing a diplomatic career, Ca
cart made extensive acquaintances among the sons
rich and influential men. From a worldly point of vi
he was doing well, and his inheritance of a handso
fortune at the age of twenty-one seemed to open up
path to very great success. Shaking the academic d
of Cambridge from his feet as soon as his Tripos v

:d, he went over to France, established himself in , and began, in a quiet, determined kind of way, to : out a little niche for himself in the world of inter- nal politics.

But now comes into his life that terrible influence h was to rob him of fortune, honour, and life itself. alls in love with a young woman of that exquisite, stible charm and beauty for which the Austrian al is world-famous. He is enthralled body and as utterly as any Chevalier des Grieux, by Simone leraa.

Mark that in this matter he follows the strict, con- tal code : complete devotion, complete discrètion. have heard how quietly he lived, how *rangé* he ap- d to be. We have had in evidence his discreet ing-account, with its generous cheques drawn to and cashed in notes of moderate denominations, with its regular accumulation of sufficient ' econo- ' quarter by quarter. Life has expanded for Denis art. Rich, ambitious, possessed of a beautiful omplaisant mistress, the world is open before him. Then, my lords, across this promising career there the thunderbolt of the Great War—ruthlessly ning through his safeguards, overthrowing the edi- of his ambition, destroying and devastating here, erywhere, all that made life beautiful and desirable. You have heard the story of Denis Cathcart's dis- ished army career. On that I need not dwell. Like ands of other young men, he went gallantly through five years of strain and disillusionment, to find lf left, in the end, with his life and health indeed, so far, happy beyond many of his comrades, but his life in ruins about him.

Of his great fortune—all of which had been in- d in Russian and German securities—literally ng is left to him. What, you say, did that matter young man so well equipped, with such excellent ctions, with so many favourable openings, ready

to his hand ? He needed only to wait quietly for a fe years, to reconstruct much of what he had lost. Ala my lords, he could not afford to wait. He stood in pe of losing something dearer to him than fortune or an bition ; he needed money in quantity, and at once.

" My lords, in that pathetic letter which we ha heard read nothing is more touching and terrible th that confession : ' I knew you could not but be u faithful to me.' All through that time of seeming happ ness he knew—none better—that his house was bu on sand. ' I was never deceived by you,' he says. Fro their earliest acquaintance she had lied to him, and knew it, and that knowledge was yet powerless to loos the bands of his fatal fascination. If any of you, n lords, have known the power of love exercised in th irresistible—I may say, this predestined manner—l your experience interpret the situation to you bett than any poor words of mine can do. One great Fren poet and one great English poet have summed the matt up in a few words. Racine says of such a fascinatio

C'est Vénus tout entière à sa proie attachée.

And Shakespeare has put the lover's despairing o stinacy into two piteous lines :

> If my love swears that she is made of truth
> I will believe her, though I know she lies.

My lords, Denis Cathcart is dead ; it is not our pla to condemn him, but only to understand and pity hi

" My lords, I need not put before you in detail t shocking shifts to which this soldier and gentleman u happily condescended. You have heard the story in its cold, ugly details upon the lips of Monsieur du Bo Gobey Houdin, and, accompanied by unavailing e pressions of shame and remorse, in the last words of t deceased. You know how he gambled, at first hones —then dishonestly. You know from whence he deriv

ıose large sums of money which came at irregular in-
rvals, mysteriously and in cash, to bolster up a bank-
:count always perilously on the verge of depletion. We
:ed not, my lords, judge too harshly of the woman.
ccording to her own lights, she did not treat him un-
irly. She had her interests to consider. While he
ıuld pay for her she could give him beauty and passion
ıd good humour and a moderate faithfulness. When
: could pay no longer she would find it only reasonable
take another position. This Cathcart understood.
Ioney he must have, by hook or by crook. And so, by
ı inevitable descent, he found himself reduced to the
nal deep of dishonour.

" It is at this point, my lords, that Denis Cathcart
ıd his miserable fortunes come into the life of my
ıble client and of his sister. From this point begin
l those complications which led to the tragedy of
ctober 14th, and which we are met in this solemn and
storic assembly to unravel.

" About eighteen months ago Cathcart, desperately
arching for a secure source of income, met the Duke
Denver, whose father had been a friend of Cathcart's
ther many years before. The acquaintance pros-
:red, and Cathcart was introduced to Lady Mary Wim-
y, at that time (as she has very frankly told us) 'at a
ose end,' 'fed up,' and distressed by the dismissal of
r fiancé, Mr. Goyles. Lady Mary felt the need of an
tablishment of her own, and accepted Denis Cathcart,
th the proviso that she should be considered a free
ent, living her own life in her own way, with the
inimum of interference. As to Cathcart's object in all
is, we have his own bitter comment, on which no
ırds of mine could improve : ' I actually brought my-
lf to consider keeping my mistress on my wife's
ıney.'

" So matters go on until October of this year. Cath-
rt is now obliged to pass a good deal of his time in
ıgland with his fiancée, leaving Simone Vonderaa un-

guarded in the Avenue Kléber. He seems to have felt fairly secure so far; the only drawback was that Lady Mary, with a natural reluctance to commit herself to the hands of a man she could not really love, had so far avoided fixing a definite date for the wedding. Money is shorter than it used to be in the Avenue Kléber, and the cost of robes and millinery, amusements and so forth, has not diminished. And, meanwhile, Mr. Cornelius van Humperdinck, the American millionaire, has seen Simone in the Bois, at the races, at the opera, in Denis Cathcart's flat.

"But Lady Mary is becoming more and more uneasy about her engagement. And at this critical moment, Mr. Goyles suddenly sees the prospect of a position, modest but assured, which will enable him to maintain a wife. Lady Mary makes her choice. She consents to elope with Mr. Goyles, and by an extraordinary fatality the day and hour selected are 3 a.m. on the morning of October 14th.

"At about 9.30 on the night of Wednesday, October 13th, the party at Riddlesdale Lodge are just separating to go to bed. The Duke of Denver was in the gun-room, the other men were in the billiard-room, the ladies had already retired, when the manservant, Fleming, came up from the village with the evening post. To the Duke of Denver he brought a letter with news of a startling and very unpleasant kind. To Denis Cathcart he brought another letter—one which we shall never see, but whose contents it is easy enough to guess.

"You have heard the evidence of Mr. Arbuthnot that, before reading this letter, Cathcart had gone upstairs gay and hopeful, mentioning that he hoped soon to get a date fixed for the marriage. At a little after ten, when the Duke of Denver went up to see him, there was a great change. Before his grace could broach the matter in hand Cathcart spoke rudely and harshly, appearing to be all on edge, and entreating to be left alone. Is it very difficult, my lords, in the face of what we have

eard to-day—in the face of our knowledge that Mademiselle Vonderaa crossed to New York on the *Berengaria* n October 15th—to guess what news had reached Denis 'athcart in that interval to change his whole outlook pon life ?

" At this unhappy moment, when Cathcart is brought ace to face with the stupefying knowledge that his nistress has left him, comes the Duke of Denver with frightful accusation. He taxes Cathcart with the vile ruth—that this man, who has eaten his bread and heltered under his roof, and who is about to marry his ister, is nothing more nor less than a card-sharper. nd when Cathcart refuses to deny the charge—when e, most insolently, as it seems, declares that he is no onger willing to wed the noble lady to whom he is ffianced—is it surprising that the Duke should turn pon the impostor and forbid him ever to touch or peak to Lady Mary Wimsey again ? I say, my lords, hat no man with a spark of honourable feeling would ave done otherwise. My client contents himself with irecting Cathcart to leave the house next day ; and hen Cathcart rushes madly out into the storm he calls fter him to return, and even takes the trouble to direct he footman to leave open the conservatory door for 'athcart's convenience. It is true that he called Cathart a dirty scoundrel, and told him he should have been icked out of his regiment, but he was justified ; while he words he shouted from the window—' Come back, ou fool,' or even, according to one witness, ' you b—— ol '—have almost an affectionate ring in them. (Laughter.)

" And now I will direct your lordships' attention to he extreme weakness of the case against my noble client rom the point of view of motive. It has been suggested that the cause of the quarrel between them was ot that mentioned by the Duke of Denver in his evidence, but something even more closely personal to hemselves. Of this contention not a jot or tittle, not

the slightest shadow of evidence, has been put forward except, indeed, that of the extraordinary witness, Robinson, who appears to bear a grudge against his whole acquaintance, and to have magnified some trifling allusion into a matter of vast importance. Your lordships have seen this person's demeanour in the box, and will judge for yourselves how much weight is to be attached to his observations. While we on our side have been able to show that the alleged cause of complaint was perfectly well founded in fact.

"So Cathcart rushes out into the garden. In the pelting rain he paces heedlessly about, envisaging a future stricken at once suddenly barren of love, wealth, and honour.

"And, meanwhile, a passage door opens, and a stealthy foot creeps down the stair. We know now whose it is—Mrs. Pettigrew-Robinson has not mistaken the creak of the door. It is the Duke of Denver.

"That is admitted. But from this point we join issue with my learned friend for the prosecution. It is suggested that the Duke, on thinking matters over, determines that Cathcart is a danger to society and better dead—or that his insult to the Denver family can only be washed out in blood. And we are invited to believe that the Duke creeps downstairs, fetches his revolver from the study table, and prowls out into the night to find Cathcart and make away with him in cold blood.

"My lords, is it necessary for me to point out the inherent absurdity of this suggestion? What conceivable reason could the Duke of Denver have for killing, in this cold-blooded manner, a man of whom a single word has rid him already and for ever? It has been suggested to you that the injury had grown greater in the Duke's mind by brooding—had assumed gigantic proportions. Of that suggestion, my lords, I can only say that a more flimsy pretext for fixing an impulse to murder upon the shoulders of an innocent man was never devised, even by the ingenuity of an advocate. I will

ot waste my time or insult you by arguing about it. gain it has been suggested that the cause of quarrel as not what it appeared, and the Duke had reason to ear some disastrous action on Cathcart's part. Of this ontention I think we have already disposed ; it is an ssumption constructed *in vacuo*, to meet a set of cir-umstances which my learned friend is at a loss to xplain in conformity with the known facts. The very umber and variety of motives suggested by the prose-ution is proof that they are aware of the weakness of heir own case. Frantically they cast about for any sort f explanation to give colour to this unreasonable in-ictment.

" And here I will direct your lordships' attention to he very important evidence of Inspector Parker in he matter of the study window. He has told you that : was forced from outside by the latch being slipped ack with a knife. If it was the Duke of Denver, who as in the study at 11.30, what need had he to force the indow ? He was already inside the house. When, in ddition, we find that Cathcart had in his pocket a knife, nd that there are scratches upon the blade such as might ome from forcing back a metal catch, it surely becomes vident that not the Duke, but Cathcart himself forced he window and crept in for the pistol, not knowing that he conservatory door had been left open for him.

" But there is no need to labour this point—we *know* hat Captain Cathcart was in the study at that time, for ve have seen in evidence the sheet of blotting-paper n which he blotted his letter to Simone Vonderaa, and ord Peter Wimsey has told us how he himself removed hat sheet from the study blotting-pad a few days after Cathcart's death.

" And let me here draw your attention to the signi-icance of one point in the evidence. The Duke of Denver has told us that he saw the revolver in his drawer short time before the fatal 13th, when he and Cathcart were together."

The Lord High Steward : " One moment, Sir Impey, that is not quite as I have it in my notes."

Counsel : " I beg your lordship's pardon if I am wrong."

L.H.S. : " I will read what I have. ' I was hunting for an old photograph of Mary to give Cathcart, and that was how I came across it.' There is nothing about Cathcart being there."

Counsel : " If your lordship will read the next sentence——"

L.H.S. : " Certainly. The next sentence is : ' I remember saying at the time how rusty it was getting.' "

Counsel : " And the next ? "

L.H.S. : " ' To whom did you make that observation ? ' Answer : ' I really don't know, but I distinctly remember saying it.' "

Counsel : " I am much obliged to your lordship. When the noble peer made that remark he was looking out some photographs to give to Captain Cathcart. I think we may reasonably infer that the remark was made to the deceased."

L.H.S. (to the House) : " My lords, your lordships will, of course, use your own judgment as to the value of this suggestion."

Counsel : " If your lordships can accept that Denis Cathcart may have known of the existence of the revolver, it is immaterial at what exact moment he saw it. As you have heard, the table-drawer was always left with the key in it. He might have seen it himself at any time, when searching for an envelope or sealing-wax or what not. In any case, I contend that the movements heard by Colonel and Mrs. Marchbanks on Wednesday night were those of Denis Cathcart. While he was writing his farewell letter, perhaps with the pistol before him on the table—yes, at that very moment the Duke of Denver slipped down the stairs and out through the conservatory door. Here is the incredible part of this

affair—that again and again we find two series of events, wholly unconnected between themselves, converging upon the same point of time, and causing endless confusion. I have used the word ' incredible '—not because any coincidence is incredible, for we see more remarkable examples every day of our lives than any writer of fiction would dare to invent—but merely in order to take it out of the mouth of the learned Attorney-General, who is preparing to make it return, boomerang-fashion, against me. (Laughter.)

" My lords, this is the first of these incredible—I am not afraid of the word—coincidences. At 11.30 the Duke goes downstairs and Cathcart enters the study. The learned Attorney-General, in his cross-examination of my noble client, very justifiably made what capital he could out of the discrepancy between witness's statement at the inquest—which was that he did not leave the house till 2.30—and his present statement—that he left it at half-past eleven. My lords, whatever interpretation you like to place upon the motives of the noble Duke in so doing, I must remind you once more that at the time when that first statement was made everybody supposed that the shot had been fired at three o'clock, and that the misstatement was then useless for the purpose of establishing an alibi.

" Great stress, too, has been laid on the noble Duke's inability to establish this alibi for the hours from 11.30 to 3 a.m. But, my lords, if he is telling the truth in saying that he walked all that time upon the moors without meeting anyone, what alibi could he establish ? He is not bound to supply a motive for all his minor actions during the twenty-four hours. No rebutting evidence has been brought to discredit his story. And it is perfectly reasonable that, unable to sleep after the scene with Cathcart, he should go for a walk to calm himself down.

" Meanwhile, Cathcart has finished his letter and tossed it into the post-bag. There is nothing more

ironical in the whole of this case than that letter. While the body of a murdered man lay stark upon the threshold, and detectives and doctors searched everywhere for clues, the normal routine of an ordinary English household went, unquestioned, on. That letter, which contained the whole story, lay undisturbed in the post-bag, till it was taken away and put in the post as a matter of course, to be fetched back again, at enormous cost, delay, and risk of life, two months later in vindication of the great English motto : ' Business as usual.'

" Upstairs, Lady Mary Wimsey was packing her suitcase and writing a farewell letter to her people. At length Cathcart signs his name ; he takes up the revolver and hurries out into the shrubbery. Still he paces up and down, with what thoughts God alone knows—reviewing the past, no doubt, racked with vain remorse, most of all, bitter against the woman who has ruined him. He bethinks him of the little love-token, the platinum-and-diamond cat which his mistress gave him for good luck ! At any rate, he will not die with *that* pressing upon his heart. With a furious gesture he hurls it far from him. He puts the pistol to his head.

" But something arrests him. Not that ! Not that ! He sees in fancy his own hideously disfigured corpse—the shattered jaw—the burst eyeball—blood and brains horribly splashed about. No. Let the bullet go cleanly to the heart. Not even in death can he bear the thought of looking—*so !*

" He places the revolver against his breast and draws the trigger. With a little moan, he drops to the sodden ground. The weapon falls from his hand ; his fingers scrabble a little at his breast.

" The gamekeeper who heard the shot is puzzled that poachers should come so close. Why are they not on the moors ? He thinks of the hares in the plantation. He takes his lantern and searches in the thick drizzle. Nothing. Only soggy grass and dripping trees. He is human. He concludes his ears deceived him, and he

eturns to his warm bed. Midnight passes. One
'clock passes.

" The rain is less heavy now. Look ! In the shrub-
ery—what was that ? A movement. The shot man is
noving—groaning a little—crawling to his feet. Chilled
o the bone, weak from loss of blood, shaking with the
ever of his wound, he but dimly remembers his pur-
ose. His groping hands go to the wound in his breast.
He pulls out a handkerchief and presses it upon the
lace. He drags himself up, slipping and stumbling.
The handkerchief slides to the ground, and lies there
eside the revolver among the fallen leaves.

" Something in his aching brain tells him to crawl
ack to the house. He is sick, in pain, hot and cold by
urns, and horribly thirsty. There someone will take
im in and be kind to him—give him things to drink.
waying and starting, now falling on hands and knees,
ow reeling to and fro, he makes that terrible nightmare
ourney to the house. Now he walks, now he crawls,
ragging his heavy limbs after him. At last, the con-
ervatory door ! Here there will be help. And water
or his fever in the trough by the well. He crawls up
o it on hands and knees, and strains to lift himself. It
s growing very difficult to breathe—a heavy weight
eems to be bursting his chest. He lifts himself—a
ightful hiccuping cough catches him—the blood rushes
rom his mouth. He drops down. It is indeed all over.

" Once more the hours pass. Three o'clock, the hour
f rendezvous, draws on. Eagerly the young lover
eaps the wall and comes hurrying through the shrubbery
o greet his bride to be. It is cold and wet, but his
appiness gives him no time to think of his surround-
ngs. He passes through the shrubbery without a
hought. He reaches the conservatory door, through
which in a few moments love and happiness will come
o him. And in that moment he stumbles across—the
ead body of a man !

" Fear possesses him. He hears a distant footstep.

With but one idea—escape from this horror of horrors—he dashes into the shrubbery, just as, fatigued perhaps a little, but with a mind soothed by his little expedition, the Duke of Denver comes briskly up the path, to meet the eager bride over the body of her betrothed.

"My lords, the rest is clear. Lady Mary Wimsey, forced by a horrible appearance of things into suspecting her lover of murder, undertook—with what courage every man amongst you will realise—to conceal that George Goyles ever was upon the scene. Of this ill-considered action of hers came much mystery and perplexity. Yet, my lords, while chivalry holds its own, not one amongst us will breathe one word of blame against that gallant lady. As the old song says:

> God send each man at his end
> Such hawks, such hounds, and such a friend.

"I think, my lords, that there is nothing more for me to say. To you I leave the solemn and joyful task of freeing the noble peer, your companion, from this unjust charge. You are but human, my lords, and some among you will have grumbled, some will have mocked on assuming these mediaeval splendours of scarlet and ermine, so foreign to the taste and habit of a utilitarian age. You know well enough that

> 'Tis not the balm, the sceptre and the ball,
> The sword, the mace, the crown imperial,
> The intertissued robe of gold and pearl,
> The farcèd title, nor the tide of pomp
> That beats upon the high shores of the world

that can add any dignity to noble blood. And yet, to have beheld, day after day, the head of one of the oldest and noblest houses in England standing here, cut off from your fellowship, stripped of his historic honours, robed only in the justice of his cause—this cannot have failed to move your pity and indignation.

" My lords, it is your happy privilege to restore to his grace the Duke of Denver these traditional symbols of his exalted rank. When the clerk of this House shall address to you severally the solemn question : Do you find Gerald, Duke of Denver, Viscount St. George, guilty or not guilty of the dreadful crime of murder, every one of you may, with a confidence unmarred by any shadow of doubt, lay his hand upon his heart and say, ' Not guilty, upon my honour.' "

CHAPTER XIX

WHO GOES HOME?

Drunk as a lord? As a class they are really very sober
Judge Cluer, in court.

WHILE the Attorney-General was engaged in the ungrateful task of trying to obscure what was not only plain but agreeable to everybody's feelings, Lord Peter hauled Parker off to a Lyons over the way, and listened over an enormous dish of eggs and bacon, to a brief account of Mrs. Grimethorpe's dash to town, and a long one of Lady Mary's cross-examination.

"What are you grinning about?" snapped the narrator.

"Just natural imbecility," said Lord Peter. "I say poor old Cathcart. She *was* a girl! For the matter of that, I suppose she still is. I don't know why I should talk as if she'd died away the moment I took my eyes off her."

"Horribly self-centred, you are," grumbled Mr Parker.

"I know. I always was from a child. But what worries me is that I seem to be gettin' so susceptible. When Barbara turned me down——"

"You're cured," said his friend brutally. "As a matter of fact, I've noticed it for some time."

Lord Peter sighed deeply. "I value your candour, Charles," he said, "but I wish you hadn't such an unkind way of putting things. Besides—— I say, are they coming out?"

The crowd in Parliament Square was beginning to tir and spread. Sparse streams of people began to drift cross the street. A splash of scarlet appeared against he grey stone of St. Stephen's. Mr. Murbles's clerk lashed in suddenly at the door.

" All right, my lord—acquitted—unanimously—and will you please come across, my lord ? "

They ran out. At sight of Lord Peter some excited ystanders raised a cheer. The great wind tore suddenly hrough the Square, bellying out the scarlet robes of the merging peers. Lord Peter was bandied from one to he other, till he reached the centre of the group.

" Excuse me, your grace."

It was Bunter. Bunter, miraculously, with his arms ull of scarlet and ermine, enveloping the shameful blue erge suit which had been a badge of disgrace.

" Allow me to offer my respectful congratulations, our grace."

" Bunter ! " cried Lord Peter. " Great God, the nan's gone mad ! Damn you, man, take that thing way," he added, plunging at a tall photographer in a made-up tie.

" Too late, my lord," said the offender, jubilantly ushing in the slide.

" Peter," said the Duke. " Er—thanks, old man."

" All right," said his lordship. " Very jolly trip and ll that. You're lookin' very fit. Oh, don't shake hands —there, I knew it ! I heard that man's confounded hutter go."

They pushed their way through the surging mob to he cars. The two Duchesses got in, and the Duke was ollowing, when a bullet crashed through the glass of he window, missing Denver's head by an inch, and icocheting from the wind-screen among the crowd.

A rush and a yell. A big bearded man struggled for a moment with three constables ; then came a succession of wild shots, and a fierce rush—the crowd parting, then

closing in, like hounds on the fox, streaming past the Houses of Parliament, heading for Westminster Bridge.

"He's shot a woman—he's under that 'bus—no, he isn't—hi!—murder!—stop him!" Shrill screams and yells—police whistles blowing—constables darting from every corner—swooping down in taxis—running.

The driver of a taxi spinning across the bridge saw the fierce face just ahead of his bonnet, and jammed on the brakes, as the madman's fingers closed for the last time on the trigger. Shot and tyre exploded almost simultaneously; the taxi slewed giddily over to the right, scooping the fugitive with it, and crashed horribly into a tram standing vacant on the Embankment dead-end.

"I couldn't 'elp it," yelled the taxi-man, "'e fired at me. Ow, Gawd, I couldn't 'elp it."

Lord Peter and Parker arrived together, panting.

"Here, constable," gasped his lordship; "I know this man. He has an unfortunate grudge against my brother. In connection with a poaching matter—up in Yorkshire. Tell the coroner to come to me for information."

"Very good, my lord."

"Don't photograph *that*," said Lord Peter to the man with the reflex, whom he suddenly found at his elbow.

The photographer shook his head.

"They wouldn't like to see that, my lord. Only the scene of the crash and the ambulance-men. Bright, newsy pictures, you know. Nothing gruesome"—with an explanatory jerk of the head at the great dark splotches in the roadway—"it doesn't pay."

A red-haired reporter appeared from nowhere with a note-book.

"Here," said his lordship, "do you want the story? I'll give it you now."

. . . . .

There was not, after all, the slightest trouble in the matter of Mrs. Grimethorpe. Seldom, perhaps, has

a ducal escapade resolved itself with so little embarrassment. His grace, indeed, who was nothing if not a gentleman, braced himself gallantly for a regretful and sentimental interview. In all his rather stupid affairs he had never run away from a scene, or countered a storm of sobs with that maddening "Well, I'd better be going now" which has led to so many despairs and occasionally to cold shot. But, on this occasion, the whole business fell flat. The lady was not interested.

"I am free now," she said. "I am going back to my own people in Cornwall. I do not want anything, now that he is dead." The Duke's dutiful caress was a most uninteresting failure.

Lord Peter saw her home to a respectable little hotel in Bloomsbury. She liked the taxi, and the large, glittering shops, and the sky-signs. They stopped at Piccadilly Circus to see the Bonzo dog smoke his gasper and the Nestlé's baby consume his bottle of milk. She was amazed to find that the prices of the things in Swan & Edgar's window were, if anything, more reasonable than those current in Stapley.

"I should like one of those blue scarves," she said, 'but I'm thinking 'twould not be fitting, and me a widow."

"You could buy it now, and wear it later on," suggested his lordship, "in Cornwall, you know."

"Yes." She glanced at her brown stuff gown. 'Could I buy my blacks here? I shall have to get some for the funeral. Just a dress and a hat—and a coat, maybe."

"I should think it would be a very good idea."

"Now?"

"Why not?"

"I have money," she said; "I took it from his desk. It's mine now, I suppose. Not that I'd wish to be beholden to him. But I don't look at it that way."

"I shouldn't think twice about it, if I were you," said Lord Peter.

She walked before him into the shop—her own woman at last.

. . . . .

In the early hours of the morning Inspector Sugg who happened to be passing Parliament Square, came upon a taxi-man apparently addressing a heated expostulation to the statue of Lord Palmerston. Indignant at this senseless proceeding, Mr. Sugg advanced and then observed that the statesman was sharing his pedestal with a gentleman in evening dress, who clung precariously with one hand, while with the other he held an empty champagne-bottle to his eye, and surveyed the surrounding streets.

"Hi," said the policeman, "what are you doing there? Come off of it!"

"Hullo!" said the gentleman, losing his balance quite suddenly, and coming down in a jumbled manner. "Have you seen my friend? Very odd thing—damned odd. 'Spec you know where find him, what? When in doubt—tasker pleeshman, what? Friend of mine. Very dignified sort of man 'nopera-hat. Freddy—good ol' Freddy. Alwaysh answersh t'name—jush like jolly ol' bloodhound!" He got to his feet and stood beaming on the officer.

"Why, if it ain't his lordship," said Inspector Sugg who had met Lord Peter in other circumstances. "Better be gettin' home, my lord. Night air's chilly-like ain't it? You'll catch a cold or summat o' that. Here's your taxi—just you jump in now."

"No," said Lord Peter. "No. Couldn' do that. Not without frien'. Good ol' Freddy. Never—desert—friend! Dear ol' Sugg. Wouldn't desert Freddy." He attempted an attitude, with one foot poised on the step of the taxi, but, miscalculating his distance, stepped heavily into the gutter, thus entering the vehicle unexpectedly, head first.

Mr. Sugg tried to tuck his legs in and shut him up, but

lordship thwarted this movement with unlooked-for ity, and sat firmly on the step.

Not my taxi," he explained solemnly. " Freddy's . Not right—run away with frien's taxi. Very . Jush went roun' corner to fesh Fred'sh taxshi—ddy jush went roun' corner fesh *my* taxi—fesh id'sh taxshi—friendship sush a beautiful thing—'t you thing-so, Shugg ? Can't leave frien'. Be-es—there'sh dear ol' Parker."

Mr. Parker ? " said the Inspector apprehensively. here ? "

Hush ! " said his lordship. " Don' wake baby, esh good shoul. Neshle'sh baby—jush shee 'm ile, don't he neshle nishely ? "

ollowing his lordship's gaze, the horrified Sugg erved his official superior cosily tucked up on the side of Palmerston and smiling a happy smile in sleep. With an exclamation of alarm he bent over shook the sleeper.

Unkind ! " cried Lord Peter in a deep, reproachful . " Dishturb poor fellow—poor hardworkin' pleesh-. Never getsh up till alarm goes. . . . 'Stra'or'nary g," he added, as though struck by a new idea, " why in't alarm gone off, Shugg ? " He pointed a waver-finger at Big Ben. " They've for-forgotten to wind p. Dishgrayshful. I'll write to *The T-T-Timesh* it it."

Ir. Sugg wasted no words, but picked up the slumber-Parker and hoisted him into the taxi.

Never—never—deshert——" began Lord Peter, sting all efforts to dislodge him from the step, when cond taxi, advancing from Whitehall, drew up, with Hon. Freddy Arbuthnot cheering loudly at the dow.

Look who's here ! " cried the Hon. Freddy. " Jolly, , jolly ol' Sugg. Let'sh all go home together."

That'sh *my* taxshi," interposed his lordship, with ity, staggering across to it. The two whirled to-

gether for a moment ; then the Hon. Freddy was flu into Sugg's arms, while his lordship, with a satisf air, cried " Home ! " to the new taxi-man, and instan fell asleep in a corner of the vehicle.

Mr. Sugg scratched his head, gave Lord Pet address, and watched the cab drive off. Then, s porting the Hon. Freddy on his ample bosom, he direc the other man to convey Mr. Parker to 12a Great mond Street.

" Take me home," cried the Hon. Freddy, burst into tears, " they've all gone and left me ! "

" You leave it to me, sir," said the Inspector. glanced over his shoulder at St. Stephen's, whenc group of Commons were just issuing from an all-ni sitting.

" Mr. Parker an' all," said Inspector Sugg, add devoutly, " Thank Gawd there weren't no witness

HE DOCUMENTS IN THE CASE

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INTRODUCTION

l Harrison to Sir Gilbert Pugh

Letter covering the attached documents.]

Redgauntlet Hotel, Bloomsbury, W.C.

18th March, 1930

AR Sir,

am obliged by your letter of yesterday's date, and :en to send you, as requested, the complete dossier locuments. When you have read them, I shall be py to call upon you at any time convenient to rself, and give you any further information that be within my power.

ll the points I specially wished to make are, I k, fully covered by my previous letter. But since letter has now served its original purpose of using your interest in the matter, I feel that it ld be better forgotten, as far as possible. I would er you came to the present documents with an rely open mind. To me, who have been working them for the last six or seven months, they seem oint clearly to one and only one conclusion, but ppose it is possible that both Sir James Lubbock I may be mistaken. You will judge for yourself. ly most earnestly beg of you to give the case your t careful consideration. You will realise that it is ital importance to me to have the matter fully stigated.

ou will, I fear, find some of the letters and state- its very diffuse and full of irrelevancies. I thought

it best to send the originals, complete and untouche
exactly as they stand. Many of the incidental detai
though unimportant in themselves, throw useful sid
lights on the situation, and will, I think, help a strang
like yourself to understand exactly what took place
my late father's household.

I have arranged the papers, as nearly as possible,
chronological order. My own statement (Number 4
explains fully how the various documents came into r
hands.

Trusting to hear further from you in due course,

I am, dear sir,
Yours faithfully,
PAUL HARRIS

SECTION ONE

SYNTHESIS

Agatha Milsom to Olive Farebrother

15, Whittington Terrace, Bayswater

9th September, 1928

Dear Olive,

Thank you very much for your letter and kind inquiries after my health. I like my new doctor very much indeed. I think he *understands me a great deal better* than Dr. Coombs, and he has put me on quite a different treatment. He says I am just going through a difficult phase" at present, and that if only I can hold on and not let things get on top of me for the next year or two I shall come out of it quite all right. But I am not to have a rest-cure! It seems Dr. Coombs was quite wrong about that—of course he didn't exactly *say* he was wrong, it wouldn't be professional, but I could see that he *thought* it! Dr. Trevor says that rest-cures only "turn you in upon yourself," and that makes things worse. He says I must get right away from myself and my feelings, so as to "sublimate" all these repressed urges and turn them into some other sort of energy. He says it was quite all right to start with to analyse my dreams and subconscious betrayals analysed, and to know exactly what was the matter with me, but that *now* the time has come when I must learn to throw all these bottled-up desires *outwards*, and give them something to do. He explained it all *most* clearly. I said, "I suppose it is sex, doctor, isn't it?" (Of course, one gets quite used to asking things perfectly frankly, and one doesn't mind it a bit.) And he said, "Well, largely; and, of course, that was a thing most

people suffered from one way and another, and in the days one couldn't always take the obvious and dire way out of a condition of sex-repression, because would often be socially and economically inco venient. I said that with two million extra women this country it didn't seem possible, certainly, f everybody to get married, and he smiled and sai " My dear Miss Milsom, half my patients come to m because they are not married—and the other h because they are ! " We had quite a laugh about He is very nice and rather good-looking, but he does seem to think it necessary for all his patients to fall love with him, like that odd man I went to see Wimpole Street, who suffered so dreadfully fr halitosis.

Well, anyway, he asked me what I was interested and I said I'd always had an idea I should like *write*. He said that was an awfully good idea, and ought to encourage it by trying my hand at a lit sketch or article every day, or by just putting down m observations of people and things as I saw them. I sure I get subjects enough in this house, as far *matrimony* goes, anyhow. Indeed, my dear, from wha see of men, I'm very glad there are *other* ways out of m troubles than what Dr. Trevor calls the *direct* way Do you mind please, not throwing my letters away just stick them in one of the drawers in my old de when you've finished with them, because I think might use some of the funny little incidents that happ here to work up into a novel some time. One puts th things down when they are fresh in one's mind, a then one forgets about them.

Well, we are jogging along here in our usual pla way—with the usual little outbreaks, of course, wh

ıeal goes wrong, as they will sometimes, with all care. Mr. Harrison is such an expert, you know, t it is very hard for a person with only one pair of .ds to keep everything up to his high standard. l, fond though I am, and always shall be, of dear ;. Harrison, I do sometimes wish that she was just *ttle* more practical. If anything at all is left to her lo, she is so apt to lose herself in a book or a day-am and forget all about it. She always says she ht to have been born to ten thousand a year—who of us could not say that? I always feel myself t I was really meant to "sit on a cushion and sew ne seam"—you remember the games we used to y about being princesses in the Arabian Nights, h a train of a hundred black slaves, carrying ala-ter bowls filled with rubies?—but alas! life is life ! we have to make the best of it. And I do sometimes it a little unfair that so *much* should come upon my ulders. Women do want romance in their lives, and re is so little of it about. Of course, as you know, I do for Mrs. Harrison—her husband is such a dry sort nan and so lacking in sympathy. I do what I can, that is not the same thing and it is very worrying. ıust learn to detach myself. Dr. Trevor says it is y important to cultivate detachment.

When I was shopping this morning I met Mr. Bell, ɔ told me the top maisonnette was let at last—to young men! I said I hoped they wouldn't be sy (though anything would be a relief after that ul woman with her children), and he said they ned quiet, gentlemanly young fellows. One of them thinks must be some kind of artist, because they e so interested in the top back room which has a window with a north light—you know, the one

Mr. Harrison always covets so much. Though, course, it is not nearly so convenient a house as ou in other ways.

I have started on Tom's stockings. They are goi to be *very* smart. I have worked out an original desi for the turnover—a sort of swirly pattern in faw brown and black, taken from the coat of the kitch cat—tabby, you know. Mr. Perry saw it the other d when he called. He thinks I have quite a talent for th kind of thing.

Give my love to Ronnie and Joan. I hope you a taking care of yourself.

Your loving sister,
Agg

2. The Same to the Same

15, Whittington Terrace, Bayswater
13th September, 19

Dear Olive,

I really think it is *very unkind* of you to suggest th I like Dr. Trevor simply because he is a *man*. I am t last person to imagine that a woman doctor is nec sarily inferior. Quite the contrary. Other things bei equal I much prefer a woman, but if the man happe to be *right* and the woman *wrong*, it would be absurd n to admit it. I do feel that Dr. Trevor's treatment doing me good, and I am not the least little bit pre diced by the sex question one way or another. daresay Tom has been airing his opinions, but that do not impress me at all. Men never ever get out their heads that the whole world centres round th

h-mightinesses. I'm not blaming Tom, but *all* men are -centred. They can't help it. Dr. Trevor says that it ı necessary part of their psychological make-up ; y have to be self-regarding, just as women have to be er-regarding—on account of the children and so on. I do beg you will not take Tom's pronouncements Gospel where I am concerned.

read such a clever article the other day by Storm ıeson, in which she said that all women, in the ths of their hearts, resented men. Now I do think t is so true. It is so maddening, the calm assumption uperiority that a man puts on when he is talking to voman. We had quite a little dispute the other ning—about Einstein, of all people ! Mrs. Harrison ted to talk about an interesting account of him in Sunday paper, but Mr. Harrison only grunted and ıt on reading something tedious about the Govern- ıt. However, she went on asking him questions till he ply *had* to answer, and then he said, quite snub- gly, that he considered the man was a charlatan ɔ was pulling people's legs with his theories. I said idn't think all these professors would believe in him l have him down to lecture and so on if it was just t. So he said, " Just you ask my old friend, Professor ock, if you won't believe me." Mrs. Harrison said couldn't ask Professor Alcock, because she had er seen him, and why didn't Mr. Harrison some- es bring somebody interesting to the house ? That ned to annoy him, though I thought it was very ch to the point, but, being only a paid subordinate, aid meekly that we were all entitled to our own nions. So he smiled sarcastically and said that haps *some* of us were better qualified to judge than ers, and that the Sunday Press was not always the

best guide to knowledge. "But *you* read the papers said Mrs. Harrison. "When I'm given the chance said he.

If I had been in Mrs. Harrison's place I should ha taken warning from the way he rattled *The Times*, b one cannot expect old heads on young shoulders— perhaps mature heads would be fairer to myself. B she is perhaps a little tactless now and again, poor gi and said if she didn't read the papers how was she improve her mind? Of course, I knew exactly wh the answer would be—the virtues of the old-fashion domestic woman and the perpetual chatter of t modern woman about things which were outside h province. It is the fatal subject, and somehow or oth it always seems to crop up. Mrs. Harrison was ve much hurt, and said of course she knew she could possibly come up to the perfections of Mrs. Harris No. 1. Then, of course, the fat was in the fire. It w just like a woman to take it personally. Mrs. Harris began to cry, and he said, "Please don't make scene," and went out and slammed the door.

What I wanted to do was just to go up to Mr. Ha rison and say, "Now do be a little human. Make fuss of her. Let her cry if she wants to and then ma it up and be friends." But he isn't the kind of pers you can very well say things to. He would think impertinent of me. And it's true that it never pays interfere between husband and wife. But if only would listen to me, I know I could put matters rig In my kind of life one gets plenty of experience lookers-on see most of the game, you know—and M Harrison would be so ready to attach herself to him, only he would give her the chance. Often and oft I've known her work herself up for hours to make

ppeal to his feelings, but he receives it so coldly. omehow it never seems to be the right moment. He is lways absorbed in his painting or his natural history r something. How true it is that men live for Things nd women for People ! To pin one's heart to a Person lways means suffering in this world, if one has an cutely-sensitive nature. You are to be congratulated, Olive, on not being sensitive. Temperament is a great ift, but a very unhappy one, as I know so well from ıy own experience. I really *admire* Mrs. Harrison—she ever loses hope, but goes on, day after day, trying to e brave and devoted and to keep up her interest in fe. And she has such a vivid, alert mind—she is keen n everything, even on things like Einstein, which are o very modern and difficult. But I do not see how one an go on being keen about things with so *very* little ncouragement.

No, my dear ! No men for me ! It's different for you, know. You have the children, and I'm sure Tom is ttentive in his man's way—but Mr. Harrison is such *stick*. And then, of course, he is a lot older than ıe is.

So you see you are quite wrong in your ideas about ıe. Naturally, I am interested in the new tenants, ecause, after all, we share the front hall and the stair- ase with them, and it does make a difference whether eople are pleasant neighbours or not, but that is all ! y the way, it's quite true that one of them is an artist. 'e saw the men carrying in the lay-figure this morn- g—a life-sized one. It came out of the van not rapped up at all—a most naked and indecent sight— ıd was carried up the path by Carter Paterson's man, oking like the rape of the Sabines ! You should have en the heads popping out of the windows all down

the street! Quite an excitement in our calm neighbourhood.

I am just turning the heel of the first stocking, tell Tom, and hope to get the pair done before you go down to Norfolk. Mr. Perry is the vicar—I'm sure I have told you about him before. Such a nice man, only rather High Church, but not at all bigoted. I always enjoy a chat with him.

I must stop now and get the joint in the oven for dinner. His lordship is coming in to prepare his special mushroom dish with his own fair hands! ! So you see we have a treat to look forward to!

Ever your loving sister,

AGGIE

3. The Same to the Same

15, WHITTINGTON TERRACE, BAYSWATER

20th September, 1928

DEAR OLIVE,

You ought to thank your lucky stars, my dear, that you *are* the sort of person for whom "a good husband" is enough. But then, of course, Mother never brought us up to be brainy. We always lived so quietly at home, and what you've never had you don't miss, as the saying goes. I can't say I should have cared for an office job myself, though perhaps it would have been better for my health if I had had something to occupy my mind. But I am really feeling much better now, and I am getting free of that dreadful sensation of being obliged to go back and see if I really have done things when I know perfectly well I have. I know you say

everybody feels like that sometimes, but you don't know what it's like to be *compelled* to do it ! The other night I got the idea that I had left the beef out on the kitchen table, and though I really remembered quite clearly shutting it up in the meat-safe, I simply *had* to creep downstairs in my dressing-gown and make sure, otherwise I shouldn't have got a wink of sleep. Still, that has been the only relapse for about a fortnight now.

As a matter of fact, we have had quite a lot of thrills this week—very good for us—occupies our minds, you know. The upstairs tenants have arrived ! ! Two young men—the artist and a poet ! They came in the day before yesterday, and oh, my dear, the bumpings and noises ! They brought a grand piano—I only hope they won't be playing it all night, because I'm simply good for nothing if I don't get my sleep before midnight—and there's a gramophone as well. Why can't people be content with the wireless, which shuts down at a reasonable hour ?

I haven't properly seen the poet yet, except that he's rather tall and dark and thin. I've only caught glimpses of him running in and out of the front door, but the artist came in the first night after dinner to ask about the coal bunkers. He is quite exciting looking—very young—not more than twenty-four or five, I should say, with a lot of thick hair and one of those rather silky-handsome faces. He has very nice manners, and didn't address *all* his conversation to Mr. and Mrs. Harrison and leave me out in the cold, as most of these young men do. Mr. Harrison, even, was quite gracious to him and offered him a drink, and he stayed talking for quite a little while. His name is Lathom, and he has very little money and has to take afternoon classes in

an Art-school, but, of course, that is only to make money until he gets recognised. He has exhibited pictures in Manchester (I think he said), and some other places up north, but he didn't talk much about his work. He seems nice and modest about it. I think Mr. Harrison is rather pleased that there should be an artist in the house. He started laying down the law about art at once, in his usual way, and brought out some of his water-colours for Mr. Lathom to look at. Mr. Lathom said they were very nice indeed, which rather surprised me, because I always think they are rather wishy-washy. However, I suppose he couldn't very well have said anything else, as he was drinking Mr. Harrison's whiskey and had never seen him till that moment.

Mrs. Harrison seemed rather nervous all the time, and she said afterwards she thought Mr. Lathom was quite a pleasant young man, but she did wish George wouldn't inflict his painting on everybody. It must be very humiliating to be ashamed of one's husband's manners.

I have a dreadful confession to make about Tom's stockings ! With all my care, one of the turn-overs has come out slightly larger and looser than the other. I *is* so tiresome ! Why should one's knitting vary so from day to day ? I suppose as long as one is a human being and not a machine one must get variations in one's work, but I thought I had been so careful. I simply can't face unpicking it all, and it isn't really very noticeable. Tell Tom, if he can manage to put up with the trifling difference for a few weeks, it will probably even itself up in the wash.

I went out to Virginia Water on Sunday on a 'bus and had a lovely walk. I have been trying to put down

ıy impressions in a little sketch. Dr. Trevor thinks
: is quite good, and says I must certainly persevere.
Ie says my power of *feeling* things so intensely ought
ɔ make me a really good writer, when I have mastered
ıe technique of putting it down on paper.

Best love to you all. Give the children each a hug
·om their Auntie. I hope you are keeping free from
ɔlds.

Your affectionate sister,
AGGIE

The Same to the Same

15, WHITTINGTON TERRACE, BAYSWATER
29th September, 1928

EAREST OLIVE,

I am so glad Tom finds he can wear the stockings all
ght. Yes, I am a wee bit proud of the pattern. And
ere's one thing about it—it's quite original. He
uldn't have bought anything like it in a shop, and
at's something in these machine-made days! Mr.
ɛrry was tremendously impressed with the finished
sult, and he said that if I cared to do that sort of
ing as a little business proposition, he thought he
uld get me quite a number of commissions among his
ırishioners. I was rather relieved, because he intro-
ıced the subject so delicately, I was afraid he was
ing to ask me to make him a present of a pair!—
ıich would have seemed rather pointed, especially as
is unmarried! Anyway, I said I should like very
ıch to do it, only, of course, I couldn't undertake to
any big orders against time. I haven't the leisure,

for one thing—and besides, inventing patterns is artistic work and can't be done to order. Mr. Perry *quite* understood, and asked how much I should charge, so I said ten shillings a pair. I think that is fair, don't you? They take ten ounces of double-knitting, not counting the small amount of coloured wool for the tops, and then there is my work to be considered, and the invention. You would have to pay *at least* fifteen shillings for anything of the same quality in a shop. I dare say with practice I shall be able to get both legs the same.

Yes! I have at last made the acquaintance of the poet. I slept very badly on Friday night, and I thought I'd like an early cup of tea, but all the milk had been used for a rice-pudding, so at seven o'clock I slipped out in my kimono to take in the morning delivery, and there, if you please, was the young man coming down-stairs with nothing on but a vest and shorts! I couldn't escape, so I carried it through as unconcernedly as I could—and really, in my pyjamas and kimono I was far less indecent than he was. I just said, "Oh, I beg your pardon, Mr. Munting" (that's his name—what a name for a poet!), "I was just taking in the milk." So he picked it up and offered it to me with a tremendous bow. I had to say *something* to the man, so I said: "Where are you off to?" and he said he was going to run round the Square to keep his figure down. I'm sure it doesn't want keeping down, for it is all joints and hollows, and I think he only said it to attract my attention to his charming person, for his eyes were looking me up and down all the time in the most unpleasant way.

He is very sallow and what Mother would have called bilious-looking, with black eyes and wrinkles

t the corners, and a sarcastic mouth, and he smiled ll the time he was speaking, in a way that makes a oman feel most uncomfortable. He looks a great deal lder than his friend—I should put him at well over irty, but perhaps it is only due to leading a fast life. didn't say much to him, but got in as quickly as I uld. I didn't want everybody to see him exposing imself there with me on the doorstep. I saw him afterards from my bedroom window, rushing round the quare like a madman.

Mr. Harrison has been more amiable lately. He has ought a wonderful new box of paints, on the strength knowing a real artist, I suppose, and spends his time orking up some of his holiday sketches. He is very xcited about a new scheme for fitting up his studio, he calls it, with some new kind of electric bulbs, hich give a light like daylight, so that he can work the evenings. So we shall get less of his company an ever. Not that it makes any difference to me, personally, only it seems such a very unsatisfactory idea married life, to be out all day and shut himself up very evening. I have written a little sketch, called These Men——." Dr. Trevor thinks it is very omising, and says I ought to try it on some of the ening papers, so I have sent it to the *Standard*.

I'm so sorry about Joan's bad throat. Do you think e wraps up enough? I will make her one of my ecial scarves, if you will tell me what coloured frocks e is wearing.

With best love,

Your affectionate sister,

AGGIE

5. John Munting to Elizabeth Drake

15A, WHITTINGTON TERRACE, BAYSWATER

30th September, 1928

DEAR BUNGIE,

Forgive me for this rotten series of scraps and post-cards, but I'm a lazy devil, and there hasn't been a place to sit down in for the last fortnight. Lathom's things are all over the place, and when I fling myself into a chair in exhaustion, after hours of shifting furniture, I'm sure to get up with one of his tubes of Permanent Blue adhering to my pants.

This place isn't too bad—rather Bayswatery, but there is a good north light for Lathom's doings, and that is the essential. We have the two top floors in this mid-Victorian sky-scraper, and share the hall and stair-case with the people downstairs, which is rather a blight on our young lives, but I daresay we shall survive it.

Unfortunately, Lathom, who is one of those com-panionable blighters, has gone and struck up an acquaintance with the Harrisons, and yesterday eve-ning I was hauled down to see them. Apparently Mr H. goes in for dabbling in water-colours, and wanted Lathom's advice about some lighting for his studio. Lathom grumbled a good deal, but I told him it was his own fault if he would go about being so chatty.

I didn't think much of Mrs. H.—she's a sort of sub-urban vamp, an ex-typist or something, and entirely wrapped up, I should say, in her own attractions, but she's evidently got her husband by the short hairs. Not good-looking, but full of S.A. and all that. He is a cut above her, I imagine, and at least twenty years older—small, thin, rather stooping, goatee beard, gold specs and wears his forehead well over the top of his head

He has a decentish post of some kind with a firm of civil engineers. I gather she is his second wife, and that e has a son *en premières noces*, also an engineer, now uilding a bridge in Central Africa and doing rather ell. The old boy is not a bad old bird, but an alarmg bore on the subject of Art with a capital A. We had o go through an exhibition of his masterpieces—Devonaire lanes and nice little bits in the Cotswolds, with ees and cottages. Lathom stuck it very well, and said ey were very nice, which is his way of expressing utter amnation—but Harrison didn't know that, so they got n together like a house afire.

They've got an appalling sitting-room, all arty stuff om Tottenham Court Road, with blue and mauve shions, and everything ghastly about it—like Ye Olde ake Tea-Roomes. Harrison is fearfully proud of his ife's taste, and played showman rather pathetically. hey keep a "lady-help"—they would!—a dreadl middle-aged female with a come-hither eye. She rnered me at the front door the other morning, just I was popping out for my daily dozen round the buses. She was prowling round the hall in rose-pink jamas and a pale-blue *négligé*, pretending to take the milk. I dawdled on the stairs as long as I could, give her a chance to run to cover, but as she apared to be determined, and the situation was beming rather absurd, I marched out, and was, of urse, involved in a conversation. I made myself as pellent as I could, but the good lady's curiosity would ke no denial. Last night was like a friendly evening th the Grand Inquisitor. I told her all she wanted know about my income and prospects and family, d Lathom's ditto so far as I knew them, and by that me she was chatting so archly (lovely word!) about

the young ladies of the neighbourhood that I thought it best just to mention that I was engaged. That worked her up into still greater excitement, but I didn't tell her much, Bungie, old dear. I've got a sort of weakness about you, though you mightn't think it, my child, so I said nothing. Hadn't I got a photograph? No, I didn't approve of photographs. Well, of course, they were only mechanical, weren't they? Hadn't Mr. Lathom painted a portrait of my fiancée? I said that, though I had few illusions about any of my belongings, I couldn't expose you to the ordeal of being painted by Lathom. So she said how like a man to talk of his belongings, and she supposed Mr. Lathom was very Modern (capital M). I said yes, terrifically so, and that he always painted his sitters with green mouths and their noses all askew. So she said she supposed I wrote poems to you instead. I replied that poems to one's fiancée were a little old-fashioned, didn't she think so, and she agreed, and said, "What was the title of my next volume?" So I said at random "Spawn," which I thought was rather good for the spur of the moment, and it rather shut her up, because she wasn't quite sure of the right answer, and just said that that sounded very modern too, and she hoped I would present her with a copy when it was printed. Then I got reckless, and said I feared it never would be printed, because Jix had his eye on me and opened all my letters to my publishers. You'd adore these people, my dear—they are like something out of one of your own books. How is the new work getting on?

I must stop now, old thing; I've been quill-driving all day on the *Life*, and I'm just about dead. But I had to write you some sort of yarn, just to show I hadn't been and gone and deserted you.

Yours, Bungie, if indeed anything of one's self can ver be anybody else's, which, as an up-to-date young roman, you will conscientiously doubt, but, at any ate, with the usual damned feeling of incompleteness n your absence, yours, blast you ! yours,

JACK

The Same to the Same

15A, WHITTINGTON TERRACE, BAYSWATER

4th October, 1928

EAR BUNGIE,

Yours to hand, and your remarks about middle-aged insters noted. I will try not to be (*a*) catty ; (*b*) mid-ictorian ; (*c*) always imagining myself to be truly run ter. I did not know I was all those things, but, being modern woman and a successful novelist, no doubt ou are quite right. Also, of course, you are quite right speak your mind. As you say, married life should e based on mutual frankness.

In return, may I just hint that there are some sides life which I, as a man, may possibly know more out than you do, merely through having lived longer nd knocked about more. I assure you I can size up me types of people pretty well. However, it may give ou pleasure to learn that Mrs. Harrison, at any rate, not out for my scalp. She has read *Deadlock* and is sgusted with its coarseness and cynicism. How do I now ? Because I was in Mudie's when she went in to hange it. The girl said, no, it wasn't a very nice book nd she was afraid at the time Mrs. Harrison wouldn't re for it, and would she like the latest Michael Arlen ? hich she did.

Our place really looks very jolly now ; I wish you could come and see it. The Picasso is over the studio fireplace and the *famille rose* jar is in my sitting-room, and so are the etchings. They give my surroundings quite a distinguished-man-of-letters appearance. I wish I could get rid of this damned *Life* and get back to my own stuff, but I'm being too well paid for it, that's the devil of it. Never mind—I'll pretend I am the Industrious Apprentice, working hard so as to be able to marry his master's daughter.

Glad the book seems to be working itself out amicably. For God's sake, though, don't overdo the psychoanalytical part. It's not your natural style. Don't listen to that Challenger woman, but write your own stuff. The other kind of thing wants writing (forgive me) fearfully well if it's to be any good, and even then it is rather dreary and old-fashioned. Glands, my child, glands are the thing, as Barrie would say. Pre-natal influences and childhood fears have gone out with compulsory Greek.

> *A Don who encountered a Mænad*
> *Was left with less wits than the Dean 'ad*
> *Till the Dean, being vexed by a Gonad,*
> *Was left with less wits than the Don 'ad :*
> *This shows what implicit reliance*
> *We may place on the progress of Science.*

Talking of Science, I have been brought up all standing by Nicholson's book on *The Development of English Biography*. According to him, "pure" biography is doomed, and we are to have the "scientific biography," which will in the end prove destructive of the literary interest. There are to be nothing but studies of heredity

ıd endocrine secretions, economics and æsthetics and
on—all specialised and all damned. This is where
get off ; I only hope this infernal work will get itself
ıblished before the rot sets in. So back to the shop,
Ir. Keats !

Yours, while this machine is to him,

JACK

On looking this through, I seem to be rather in a
olding mood. But it's only because I think so highly
your stuff that I don't want you to get sloppy and
ycho. That kind of thing is all sentimentality, really.
out comprendre, c'est tout pardonner ; tout pardonner, c'est
ut embêter.

The Same to the Same

15A, WHITTINGTON TERRACE, BAYSWATER

8th October, 1928

ARLING OLD BUNGIE, OLD THING—

All right, damn it, no ! I don't want to hector and
down the law. You carry on in your own way, my
ild, and don't pay any attention to me. I quite see
ıat you say about taking things for granted—so we'll
it down quite clearly for future guidance that, al-
ough I am always right, I must never be so ex officio
d because I am a man and a husband. No doubt it
irritating. I hadn't quite looked at it from that point
view, but possibly there is something in it. Signed
cko, the almost-human Ape.

Making a strenuous effort to adopt this feminine
:w-point, I am beginning to wonder whether my

neighbour goes quite the right way to assert his position as head of the household. I fancy he must have read somewhere that women like to be treated rough and feel the tight hand on the rein and that sort of thing. Unfortunately, nature did not design him for a sheik part, having made him small, dry, and a little bald on top.

We were just starting off to dine with Lambert the other night, and were waiting in the hall for a taxi, when Mrs. H. came in, rather flurried and very wet. She was hanging up her waterproof, when Harrison came charging out on the landing and called down :

" Is that you, Margaret? Do you know what time it is ? "

" I'm sorry—I won't be a moment."

" Where on earth have you been ? "

" That's a secret " (in the tone of voice of someone who wants to have the secret teased out of her. She was laughing to herself, and had a fattish parcel tucked under her arm).

" Oh ! I suppose it's all the same to you if the dinner's uneatable."

Evidently no interest was to be taken in the " secret." The next effort was along the lines of cheerful common sense.

" Why didn't you begin without me ? "

" I don't choose to. This is my home—or supposed to be—not a hotel " (in a tone of peevish protest).

She had gone past us up to the first-floor landing, and, like the Wedding-Guest, we could not choose but hear.

" I'm sorry, dear. I was getting something for to-morrow."

" That's no excuse. You've been chattering to some

f your office friends in some tea-shop or other and ɔrgetting all about what you were supposed to be oing. No, I don't want any dinner now."

" Oh, very well."

He came running downstairs then and saw us. I ıink it gave him a shock, because he pulled himself p and smiled and said something vague. Then he ırned and called up the stairs again :

" All right, my dear, I'll be up in a minute." His ɣes were unhappy. There's something wrong in this ouse—something more than a little misunderstanding bout dinner time. I shouldn't wonder if she gives ıis man a devil of a time—probably without meaning , that's the rub. Lathom, who is at the chivalrous ge, was all for youth and beauty, of course, and anted to hop out and sling the old boy into his own mbrella stand, but I told him not to be an infernal ıs. Why shouldn't the woman come home in time r meals ? It's not much to do, and I don't believe ıe has any other job in life except to sit reading ɔvels in the front window all day. I know, I've seen ɛr at it. All the same, I do wish we had a separate aircase. It's a bore to have people fighting out eir matrimonial quarrels on one's front doorstep. m a man of peace, I am.

I heard afterwards (per Lathom, via Miss Milsom) at the mysterious parcel was a present for Harrison, e next day being their wedding-anniversary. The w in the hall rather spoilt the sentiment of the casion, I gather. Lathom says the man is a brute. ıt I don't altogether see that. He couldn't be supposed know, and anyhow, what is the good of giving a rson a lavish display of affection with one hand ıd rubbing pepper into his eyes with the other ?

Oh, Bungie, it's the silly little things of life that I'm afraid of. Don't they frighten you, too, competent as you are?

Yours always,

JACK

8. The Same to the Same

15A, WHITTINGTON TERRACE

12th October, 1928

DEAREST BUNGIE,

Things are looking up. This *Life* will be finished by Christmas, I hope. I am rather stuck at present over the chapter on "Religious Convictions." It is difficult to bring one's mind into sympathy with that curious Victorian blend of materialism and trust in a personally interfering Providence. It's odd how they seem to have blinded themselves to the hopeless contradiction between their science and their conventional ethics. On the one hand, an acceptance of the Darwinian survival of the fittest, which ought to have made them completely ruthless in theory and in practice; on the other, a sort of sentimental humanitarianism, which directly led to our own special problem of the multitudinous survival of the unfittest. They seem to have had a pathetic belief that it could all be set right by machinery. I don't know, come to think of it, that we are in a much better position to-day, except that we have lost the saving belief in machinery. Which doesn't stop our becoming more and more mechanical, any more than *their* having lost their belief in anthropomorphism stopped them

n becoming more and more humanitarian. Com-
mise—blessed word!—Chesterton speaks some-
ere of the great Victorian compromise—but why
torian, more than anything else? At any rate,
y had the consolation of feeling that this earth
l its affairs were extremely large and important—
ugh why they should have thought so, when they
e convinced they were only the mechanical out-
ıe of a cast-iron law of evolution on a very three-
four planet, whirling round a fifth-rate star in
nitable space, passes human comprehension. It
ıld be more reasonable to think so to-day, if
lington and those people are right in supposing
t we are rather a freak sort of planet, with quite
ısual facilities for being inhabited, and that space
sort of cosy little thing which God could fold up
put in his pocket without our ever noticing the
erence. Anyhow, if time and space and straight-
and curliness and bigness and smallness are all
tive, then we may just as well think ourselves
ortant as not. "Important, unimportant—un-
ortant, important," as the King of Hearts said,
ng to see which sounded best. So, like the Vic-
ans, we shall no doubt compromise—say it is
ortant when we have a *magnum opus* to present
an admiring creation, and unimportant when it
s our convenience to have our peccadilloes passed
-.

orgive me wandering away like this. It's just a
of talking the thing out with you before I talk
ut in the book. Because, for some reason, it does
ı to me important to do this job as well as I can
ot merely because it will do me good with pub-
ers, and so make it possible to embark on the

important triviality of marriage, but for some obscu
and irrational motive connected with the developme
of my soul, if I may so allude to it. I am increasing
not clear whether I am a mess of oddly-assort
chemicals (chiefly salt and water), or a kind of hyp
trophied fish-egg, or an enormous, all-inclusive cosm
of solar-systematically revolving atoms, each o
supporting planetfuls of solemn imbeciles like m
self.

But, whatever I am, I must finish the *Life* and th
get on to *our* life, Bungie, because that somehow do
count for something to

Ja

9. *The Same to the Same*

15A, Whittington Terrace, Bayswater

15th October, 19

I knew it, Bungie—I knew it, I knew it ! I kn
we should be asked downstairs to tea. And we'
been ! Down among the Liberty curtains and t
brass Benares ware ! Three young women, two brig
youths, the local parson and the family. Crocke
from Heal's and everything too conscientiously brig
Mrs. Harrison all radiance and very much the cen
of attraction.

No sooner had I got there than I was swept into
discussion about " this wonderful man Einstein
Extraordinarily interesting, wasn't it, and what did
make of it ? Displaying all my social charm, I said
thought it was a delightful idea. I liked thinki
that all the straight lines were really curly, and o

ıed I'd known all about it at school, because it ıld have annoyed the geometry master so much. But you do think there's something in it, don't ? My husband says it is all nonsense, but what *you* say ? "

here was a little stir of triumph about this, and I ehow gathered that the Einstein topic had been berately chosen for a purpose. I said guardedly I believed the theory was now generally accepted mathematicians, though with very many reserves. It really is, is it ? Really true that nothing actu- exists as we see it ? I do hope so, because I have ays felt so strongly that materialism is all wrong. re is something so deadening about materialism, there ? I do so wish I knew what life means what we really are. But I can't understand e things, and, you know, I should so like to, if I had someone to explain them to me."

As far as I can make out," I replied, " you are only made up of large lumps of space, loosely together with electricity. It doesn't sound flat- ıg, but there it is."

ıe frowned attractively.

But I can't believe that."

Why do you want to believe it ? " said Harrison. s all words. When it comes to doing anything tical you have to come back to common sense. friend Professor Alcock——"

Yes, yes, I know." She waved the interruption e impatiently. " But the idea is the real thing, it ? Haven't they come round to thinking that ry and imagination and the beautiful things of mind are the only true realities after all ? "

Of course beauty is the only true reality," said

Lathom eagerly. "But it isn't always what ordinar people think of as beauty. I mean, it's not pretty pretty. When you think a thing, then you create and it exists. What's the use of arguing what yo make it *of*? That doesn't matter to the thing itse any more than the stuff paints are made of matters the picture."

"It matters a good deal in practice," said Harriso "Now the Pre-Raphaelites understood that—thoug mind you, I don't think much of the Pre-Raphaeli school myself. Some of their pictures are so remar ably ugly, and so exaggerated in colour. Take th thing of Holman Hunt's, now——"

"Darling," said Mrs. Harrison, with emphas "you're side-tracking."

"No, I'm not. I'm coming back to that. What mean is that the Pre-Raphaelites, especially Willia Morris, knew a great deal about the material of the paints. They used to get the right stuff and gri it themselves, so as to be sure it wasn't adulterate Now I'm all of their opinion. I say they were qui right. I get my colours from a man up in town, wholesale dealer——"

"My husband is always so literal," said Mrs. Har son, taking the whole company into a confederacy condemn the unfortunate man. "But I didn't me that at all. Mr. Lathom understands what I mean don't you, Mr. Lathom?"

"Yes," said Lathom, "and, of course, it's true a way. But you mustn't think that the form of t thing doesn't matter, too. Whatever the world is ma of, there it is, and it's ours to make something of."

"It must be marvellous to paint great pictures said one of the young women.

athom scowled frightfully, and, ostentatiously oring her, continued his remarks to Mrs. Harrison an undertone.

What a conversation, my God ! Harrison faded out I I don't blame him, and I took the opportunity to kle the parson, a fellow by the name of Perry. He ned out to be an earnest and cultivated middle- d spike from Keble, and I took the opportunity mention the *Life* and the difficulties about Vic- an materialism.

Yes," he said, " we've rather got past that stage v, haven't we? I've got one or two books that hink might be useful to you, as giving the point iew and all that. Shall I send them over ? "

said it was very good of him (not expecting much n it), and, by way of a leg-pull, asked him what thought of relativity.

Why, I'm rather grateful to it," said he, " it makes job much easier. We'll have a chat some day l go into it. I must be going now."

le oozed competently away, and the party rambled till I could stand it no longer and rambled out into passage, where I met Harrison.

Hullo ! " said he, " come and have a pipe in the lio. And a whiskey-and-soda or something. Better n tea."

went in, expecting him to talk Art, but he didn't. just sat smoking in silence and I did likewise. I an idea I ought to say something to him, but hing presented itself. If I had said what I felt like ng, he would have been angry with me.

o much for social life in Suburbia. I had a letter n Jim on Wednesday. He is thoroughly enjoying self in Germany, and begs to be remembered to

you. He is reading hard—or so he says—and he jolly well better, the young cub, since if he fails in h tripos there's no money to give him another year the and he'll have to go as an apothecary's apprentice something. I haven't looked up Cynthia or the Brierle yet, but I will pull myself together and do it before lon

Love to everybody. Wish I was up north with y among the burrns and the birrds. Give the Guv'n my love. Has he had good sport ? I suppose the hills a beginning to look a bit grim again now, bless th granite hearts. Remember me to all the artist fraterni

Ever and ever yours, funny-face, old dear. I'd li to see your cheery grin now and again. I must damned fond of you—sometimes it positively puts off my stroke. Damned inconvenient. I shall rea have to see about this marriage business. I cann have my work interrupted in this way.

Your deeply injured

JA

10. Agatha Milsom to Olive Farebrother

15, WHITTINGTON TERRACE, BAYSWATER

15.10

DEAREST OLIVE,

I am so sorry I have not written for such a long tim but I have been feeling anything but fit. This household is *most* trying to live with, and I really feel that in m present nervous condition I am hardly fit to cope w my work here. I have been to Dr. Trevor and put t whole situation very fully and carefully before him, a he agrees that I certainly ought not to be subjected

nuch emotional strain. On the other hand, I know
r Mrs. Harrison does cling to me so much for
pathy and support that it seems almost wicked not
.ang on if I can possibly manage it. She has no one
to confide in at all, and I do at least feel that here
n being of real use to somebody. Dr. Trevor says
: if only I can lose sight of my own difficulties in
ɔing her with hers, it will be good for me to make the
rt, provided I do not let the atmosphere of the house
on my nerves. I have started a little exercise on
ıé lines. Every morning I say to myself: "I am
l, strong, confident," twenty times, and at night I
: "I am satisfied and at peace," also twenty times.
Trevor thinks these are quite good phrases to say.
did hope, a few days ago, that the difficulty was
ıg to solve itself. Mrs. Harrison announced that
was going to take up office work again. The idea
t seemed to brighten her up tremendously, and I
k it would be the best thing she could do. But,
:ourse, the Bear played his old trick again. When
first announced her decision, he pretended to agree,
said she could do as she liked, so she was awfully
.sed, and rang up one of the people at her old office
ɔe if they had a vacancy there. As it happened, they
, and she practically arranged to start work next
k. Then Mr. Bear started off. "All right? Well,
ppose it is all right if you think so. But don't you
k it's a trifle hard on me, my dear, having a wife
all day, fagging herself to death in an office and
ing home fit for nothing? I give you a good home,
I rather expected, or hoped, you would like to
:e it a home for me to come back to. That is the usual
., isn't it? But I suppose the modern woman thinks
ɔrently about these things. If hotel life is your

notion of happiness you ought to go and live i
America."

It is too bad to work upon the poor girl's feelin
in that selfish way. She tried to reason with him, bu
of course, the end was that she made herself perfect
sick with crying, and wrote and told the people th
she couldn't manage to take the job after all. And no
he goes about saying it's a pity she can't find somethin
better to do with herself than reading trashy novels a
day. I spoke up. I said, " Mr. Harrison, excuse me, b
you ought not to speak to your wife like that. She ga
up the work she wanted to do, *entirely* to please you, an
I think you ought to consider her a little more an
yourself a good deal less." I daresay he wasn't be
pleased, but I thought it my duty to say it. I felt mo
terribly exhausted after this trying scene. It is such
drain upon one's personality, coping with outbreaks
this kind. One is giving, giving, all the time. I a
asking Dr. Trevor to prescribe me a tonic. A curio
feature of my malady at the moment is a craving f
shrimps. Our fishmonger keeps very good ones, b
sometimes I have to go quite a long way to get the
because I am afraid he will think it funny if I b
shrimps every day.

I am sure I don't know what we should do if it we
not for Mr. Lathom. He often drops in of an eveni
now and cheers us up immensely. The Bear is alwa
dragging the poor man off into his studio, as he calls
to twaddle about art, but Mr. Lathom has most d
lightful manners and puts up with it heroically. H
thinks my scarf-patterns and stocking-tops show gre
talent, " a very good sense of design." He is a re
artist, so I am sure he wouldn't say so if he didn
think it.

Ve do not see much of the objectionable Mr. inting, I am glad to say. He often doesn't come home very late. You never know what these men are er. It is a good thing that he shares the maisonnette h Mr. Lathom, who I am sure would not allow undesirable goings-on under our roof.

hope darling Joan is quite strong again now. Give my love, and say I have started on the scarf. I am ng a pattern of purple and white clematis, which will very chic, I think.

Your loving sister,
AGGIE

John Munting to Elizabeth Drake

15A, WHITTINGTON TERRACE
19.10.28

Damn it all, yes, Bungie—I suppose you are right. r ideas are always ahead of our actions, or rather, ew to them, and we move lop-sided, like a knight a chess-board. We get somewhere, even if it isn't place we thought we were aiming for. By the e the next generation has come along, the ideas ch were new and strange to us have become part of habitual commonplace. It goes straight along them, n when it imagines it is rebelling against them.

nd after all, this business of imagining that one is kind of thing and *being* actually another—we all do all the time, so why shouldn't whole nations and ods do it? Have you read J. D. Beresford's *Writing d*, by the way? It is enormously fascinating, and

I delight in the bit where he tells how, in his callo youth, he had a " passionate impulse " to " save " young prostitute he had talked to, and then pray desperately to be delivered from the sin of hypocri and be made single-hearted and all that—only to delighted, later on in life, with the discovery that he w " not one person but fifty." One imagines—one dram tises oneself into the belief that one is going one wa and lo and behold ! the path " gives itself a little shake like the one in *Alice* and one finds oneself walking at the front door again.

Our friend Mrs. Harrison is a perfect example of t dramatisation business—and is quite capable of dram tising herself in two totally inconsistent directions once, rather like the Victorian age. Any attitude th appeals to her sense of the picturesque she appropria instantly, and, I really believe, with perfect sincerit If she reads a " piece in the paper " about the mode woman who finds spiritual satisfaction in a career, s *is* that woman ; and her whole life has been ruined having had to give up her job at the office. Capab intelligent, a comradely woman, meeting male a female on a brisk, pleasant, man-to-man basis—the she is ! If, on the other hand, she reads about t necessity of a " complete physical life " for the develo ment of personality, then she is the thwarted matern woman, who would be all right if only she had a chi Or if she gets a mental picture of herself as a Gre Courtesan (in capital letters), she is perfectly p suaded that her face only needed opportunity to bu the topless towers of Ilium. And so on. What she rea is, if reality means anything, I do not know. But I c see now, what I didn't see before, that this power dramatisation, coupled with a tremendous vital

plenty of ill-regulated intelligence, has its fascina-
. If ever she found anyone to take one of her
ersonations seriously, she would probably be able
ve very brilliantly and successfully in that character
—well, not all her life, perhaps, but for long enough
nake an impressive drama of it. Unfortunately, the
llent Harrison is not a good audience. He admires,
he won't clap, which must be very discouraging.
ou will gather from this that I have been seeing a
l deal of the Harrisons. Quite right, Sherlock, I
e. When you once make up your mind to look on
ple as social studies, you can get quite reconciled
heir company. Mrs. H. cornered me in the artistic
ng-room last night, while her husband was telling
nom about aerial perspective, to tell me about her
personality. She feels cramped in her surround-
, it seems. Her mentality has no room to expand.
so hard for a woman, isn t it ? Perhaps the only
is to express herself through her children—but
—if one has no children ? She said she always felt
could have made herself a happy life by living for
in others. I did not say that she would probably
by devouring her hypothetical family, though I
d very well see her doing it. I felt mischievous, and
that there were other forms of passionate altruism,
that I could see her in a cloister, walking serenely
ng the lilies and burning her soul away in contem-
ion. Could I really ? Well, yes, there was something
wonderful about the life of devotion. I ought to
e a book about it. At this point I became a little
ned, and turned the conversation to new books.
had a little difficulty, because her idea of an im-
ant writer and my idea are not exactly identical ;
ever, we agreed that *The Constant Nymph* was a

very good piece of work, and, encouraged by that, sh tackled the awkward question of *Deadlock*. I tried t explain what I had really meant by it, and she prove quite adaptable. She said she did not mind a book being " powerful," provided it was filled with a " sens of the beautiful." She thought *Sweet Pepper* was powe ful, but nevertheless there was something about it tha redeemed it. What a pity it was that Hutchinso hadn't written another book like *If Winter Comes*. Sh thinks that if only I wouldn't be so harsh and mockin I might write a book as strong and really beautiful a that.

These are the people who read the books, Bungi And what are we to do about it, you and I, if we wa to live by bread?

Next day I met her in the hall, dressed in a demu grey frock, with a long veil swathed nun-like abo her cloche hat. She saluted me with a grave and fa away smile. I grinned cheerfully, and mentioned th I was going to watch a football match.

Your not-very-well-behaved and rather malicious

JAC

12. The Same to the Same

20.10.

MY DEAR BUNGIE,

Don't be a silly ass. I thought you had more sen than the ordinary futile sort of woman. I am not the least fascinated by Mrs. Harrison. She quite simp interests me as a type—a personality, that is. It is n job to be interested in people. I might want to use th kind of person in a book some day.

Good heavens! If I was "fascinated" by her, I ouldn't be likely to analyse her in that dispassionate y. She is essentially a suburban vamp, as I think aid before, if you have thought any of my remarks rth remembering. And I never said she was beauti- Her mouth is sloppy and bad. . . .

Later: Saunders Enfield burst in on me when I was ting this, and hauled me out to lunch with him. On urning, with the better part of a bottle of perfectly od Corton inside me, I realise that the brilliant line defence I am taking up is exactly the one I should ually have taken if the accusation had been true. I uld have said just those things, in exactly that tone xasperated superiority, and I should have elaborated m with such a wealth of detail that you could not ve failed to disbelieve every word of it.

My first impulse (after lunch, I mean) was to destroy incriminating paper, and to ignore your observa- ns altogether. But I think that would probably have ighly suspicious appearance also. Upon my word, I n't believe there *is* any convincing reply to such a rge.

Except to tell you that I honestly don't care a damn any woman in the world except one. And if you don't ieve that, my child, then it doesn't matter what you nk of me, because I shall be beyond caring.

believe you're only pulling my leg, anyhow. Blast ! Don't do it again.

And believe me (as the business people say),

Yours faithfully,

JACK

13. The Same to the Same

15A, WHITTINGTON TERRACE, BAYSWATER

22.10.2

Hullo, Bungie, darling ! My God, but I'm playe
out ! I've been sticking to the accursed *Life* like a leec
and have finished the religious outlook. Having groun
it out with incredible sweat and travail, I read
through and thought it so awful that I was in tw
minds about chucking the whole thing into the fir
However, I didn't, but instead went over and joine
Jim in Paris for a week, on his way home, as you sa
by my post-card. We had a mildly riotous time in th
cheerful city, restraining each other in a brotherly wa
from the more perilous kinds of exuberance, ar
reached home feeling fit for anything. I took up th
infernal religious outlook, read it through again, ar
came to the conclusion that it was bloody good stu
after all ! So now I am pressing forward with shouts
joy and encouragement to the critical estimate, whi
is the only part of the thing I really want to write
all. Dilkes, the dear old man, to whom I explained m
troubles, talked to me like fifty fathers, and said extr
ordinarily nice things. He thinks, by the way, that t
flippant and imaginative kind of biography has had
day, having been too much imitated, and that the tir
has come round again for solid facts and researc
" The great humility of science, in face of the infini
and valuable variety of Truth." Isn't that an exquis
Victorian remark ? " We should pray," said he, maki
me feel like a very grubby fourth-form infant, " to
delivered from cleverness, because very clever peop
end by finding that nothing is worth while." So I sa
rather ungraciously, that probably nothing *was* wor

le, and he gave the funniest twinkle from under his
k eyebrows and replied : " You must not think
:, or you will become a bore."

ly parson turns out to be rather an enlightened
:on. It appears he took a mathematical tripos among
:r things, which is one up to him. He also has read
lington, and, moreover, took it for granted that I
read Jeans and Japp and one or two other fantastic
ntists whose names I had never heard of, which was
up to him. Also, he seemed quite delighted about
whole thing, and said he was thankful to find that
ntists would at last allow him to believe what the
urch taught, which in his young days they wouldn't.
ould have put this down to the usual shifty ecclesi-
:al clap-trap, but for the obvious fact that he knew
t he was talking about, and I didn't, so, feeling a
, I put a good face on the matter and asked his
ice about the religious outlook chapter. He gave me
e really very useful stuff about Victorian materia-
, which you will find in the book when it's
hed. We ended by discussing, with much laughter,
e incredibly silly letters from correspondents in the
y Dispatch, one of whom said : " Sir, Genesis says
God made Adam from the dust of the earth. God
ne initial cause and dust is protoplasm. Yours
ıfully " ; while the reply observed briefly, " Sir,
t is not protoplasm, Yours faithfully."

earest, do you really want to be married to the
of unsatisfactory bloke I am ? It is extraordinarily
·e and dear of you. You will have a devil of a time.
ant to warn you now that when I say I want you
eep your independence and exquisite detachment,
n't really mean it. I shall try to mould you into the
or of myself, fatally and inevitably. When I say

I am not jealous, either of your work or your friend
I am lying. When I promise to look at things from you
point of view, I am promising what I cannot perform
When I declare myself ready to discuss everything full
and freely and have a *situation nette*, I am pretending t
be more honest than a man ever is or can be. I sha
be reticent, inconsistent, selfish and jealous. I sha
put my interests before yours, and the slightest sug
gestion that I should put myself out to give you peac
and quietness to work in will wound my self-impor
ance. I know it. I shall pretend to give you freedon
and make such an unholy martyr of myself that yo
will take up your chains for the sake of a quiet lif
You will end by hating me, and leave me for som
scamp of a fellow who knows how to handle wome
And you will be quite right, from your point of viev
I have been trying to look honestly into the thing, an
I want to warn you. You think I am " different," bu
I am not. With all your theoretical knowledge, Bungi
you haven't had experience. You are generous, I knov
and think you are willing to risk it, but I must try an
make you understand the facts. Don't think that I a
wanting for one moment to cut our engagement ou
I want you as I have never wanted anything. I wa
you terribly. But do try and understand that it won
be what you think. I don't want us to end in a ghast
sort of muddle.

I know you will say that you understand, but yo
don't. You have an idea—all women have—that yo
can enter into a man's point of view. You can't ; an
more than I can enter into a woman's point of viev
Don't, for God's sake, tell me to cheer up and it w
be all right. Don't be sweet and understanding—
brutal, if you like—I shall not take offence at anythi

ou may say, but I want you to realise what you are for.

Yours ever,
JACK

S. This is arrant hypocrisy. I am bound to take fence, whatever you say, and we shall have one of ose painful and acrimonious arguments. If you say thing, I shall be offended at that, too. But for God's ke don't chuck me, Bungie.

The Same to the Same

15A, WHITTINGTON TERRACE, BAYSWATER

26.10.28

CAREST AND MOST WONDERFUL BUNGIE,

Forgive me for writing you such a foul letter, and ss you for answering it so promptly. The alarming of faults which you have produced in answer to me relieves my mind a good deal. Thank Heaven a woman with a sense of humour. I was feeling her awful that day, being thoroughly fagged, and d, I suppose, a grouch against civilisation. But I ite agree about the innocent "animal" business; an imagine nothing more tedious. All the same, I l very strongly, in my more honest moments, that e has got to be happy, for fear it should become important. I can't expect you to understand this, d you would be an unnatural woman if you did, d I should hate you for it. But I do feel that the old ot long will his love stay behind him" attitude is rading and horrible. I don't want to feel that anyy's life and happiness is bound up with mine. What

dignity is there in life if one is not free to take one's own risks? It doesn't matter whether it's a wife or a parent or a child or a brother—people should set their own value on themselves and not "live for others" or "live only in their children," or whoever it is. It's beastly. And yet—if I heard *you* say that—I don't know, but I expect I should go off the deep end like poor old Harrison.

I think Lathom is rather getting on my nerves. If I had known he was such a gregarious devil I don't think I should have agreed to set up housekeeping with him. Fortunately, as he is merely an acquaintance, and *not* my wife or my father or my brother, I can more or less ignore his vagaries. He is always "running down" to see the Harrisons, and having them up here. You can't get on with your work when people are everlastingly coming in and out. I just chuck it now, and sit tight in my own room, and let them get on with it.

I like the old boy, though—and, by jove, he does know how to cook! Yes, cook! He has a passion for cookery as a fine art. I must get him to show me how to make omelettes—I don't believe *you* know anything about it, do you? Also rump-steak, on which his views are very sound. He also has a fungus complex—thinks the poor peasant ought to go forth and cull his grub from the hedgerow, and all that. He knows a tremendous lot about edible toadstools and delivers lectures on them to Lathom, for whom he has taken a great fancy. As a matter of fact, Lathom is one of those offensively healthy people who shove down anything that is set before them, but Harrison doesn't see that, and enthuses mildly on in a sort of resistless river of speech that forces itself past all

terruptions. Mrs. H. yawns, Miss Milsom yawns, ıthom yawns and I do my best not to yawn, because m the only person here who has any real sympathy th the subject, so it's up to me. I'm not sure, though, at his monologues aren't better than her intense ıets. However, Harrison has now gone away into e country on his lonesome, so perhaps we shall be e of visitors for a bit.

I have been round to see Merritt & Hopkins, and is time saw the great Man of Merritt himself. He ıs very genial, and encouraged me to dig my old vel out of its sepulchre, in a last forlorn effort. ou know—the one I wrote just before I met you, d which no one will have anything to do with. e has promised to read it himself, which was so cent of him that I hadn't the heart to suggest at a younger man might look upon it with more mpathy!

I have just been reading the *Messenger's* interview th you, my child. How entertaining! What grand blicity! And how damnably impertinent. I sup- se I shall be expected to put up with everybody's ving the right to comment on My Wife in public. e shall have rows about it; I see that inevitably. shall sneer first and then lose my temper, and if ı once give in you will be a lost woman.

Are you still quite sure you want to risk matrimony h

Yours infuriatingly,

JACK

15. George Harrison to Paul Harrison

THE SHACK, NEAR MANATON, DEVON

22.10.2

MY DEAR BOY,

This month I must begin by wishing you very man happy returns of the day, and I trust that the mail wi live up to its reputation and deliver my letter in tim for the auspicious occasion. God bless you, my dea boy, and send you all happiness and prosperity. Yo are now thirty-six years old—still a very young ma to hold the responsible position you have made fo yourself. Yet to me it seems strange to think that whe I was your age I had been married and settled for six teen years ! I was only a boy of twenty when I mar ried your dear Mother ! Her memory is very near an dear to me at this time, as indeed, at all times. Yo must never think that, because I have formed other tie of late years, I do not think of her with the deepe affection. But I know you do not think so. You kno that there is room in my heart for both ; and it is great happiness to me to have a son whose face recall even more vividly as the years go by, that of my dea first wife.

I was greatly pleased to have your letter and t know that the work goes so well. Yours is a great oppo tunity. I know how proud and happy I should hav been at your age to have the advantage of workin under so distinguished a man as Sir Maurice. In m opinion he is the greatest engineer of his day. It most gratifying that he should entrust so much of th responsible work to you. Be very careful to check *eve* figure and test *everything*, no matter how small, befo it is put in place. The most brilliant calculations wi

t compensate for a defective bolt. Dolby's is a first-
ss firm, but it is a sound rule to take nothing for
anted.

As you see, I am down in the old shack for my usual
liday. I was obliged to take it rather late this year,
I could not be spared from the office till we had got
: new power-station through. However, the weather
fortunately very favourable, and I have been able
do a good deal of sketching as well as rambling after
igi. I missed our old Puff-ball friend, *Lycoperdon*
anteum, of course, but I gathered a beautiful dish of
: little *Amethyst Agaric* yesterday, and to-morrow
rning I am going out in search of *Amanita rubescens*,
ich I intend to try very slowly and delicately
wed in beef broth, or in a mock-beef gravy of
tulina Hepatica, if I can find one in good condition.
lo not know whether any one has ever tried this
nbination of two fungi. If it is a success I shall give
: recipe in the little book I am writing on *Neglected*
ible Treasures. Messrs. Hopkin & Bigelow are in-
ested in my "operculum," and I rather think they
an to publish it.

am sorry you are not here to go a-mushrooming
h me. Margaret, of course, does not care for this
d of camp-life—I could not expect it of such a
rough little town-bird as she is—so I have had to
ome an old bachelor for the time being. I am hoping
t young Lathom will come out with me sometimes
sketching expeditions. He seems a very decent,
ndly young fellow, and it is very pleasant to have
ellow-artist in the place, with whom to exchange
as. He runs in and out of our flat frequently of an
ning, and we are always glad to see him. His lively
tter seems to amuse Margaret, and it is nice to have

some young life about the place. We do not see quite so much of his friend Munting. He is reserved and quiet and talks modestly enough, though I believe he has written a book of very *risqué* verse and a rather salacious novel. Margaret says she dislikes his sarcastic manner, but I cannot say I have found him in any way objectionable. Miss Milsom seems to have taken offence at something he said to her, but then she is not a particularly sensible woman. Nothing I can say will stop her putting dripping in the pan when frying a steak, which is a great nuisance. She has no real feeling for cookery.

Well, my boy, I have written rather a long letter and I must stop now, as I see the lad approaching with the bread, and I must secure his services to take this to the post. I enclose a little cheque, as an offering which is always suitable in every season and country and remain,

With every good wish,
Your affectionate Father,
GEO. HARRISON

16. Agatha Milsom to Olive Farebrother

15, WHITTINGTON TERRACE, BAYSWATER
25.10.2[illegible]

DEAREST OLIVE,

We are all breathing again! The Bear has taken himself off for one of his camping holidays, complete with painting outfit and half a dozen scribbling pads. He is actually going to write a book!—telling people how to live on nettles and toadstools and that sort of

ıing, and how in case of another Great War we could ıpport the entire nation on boiled hedgehogs or some ıch nastiness. My dear, it is such a relief to get him ıt of the house ! Of course, he couldn't go off with-ıt creating an unpleasantness. He was absurd enough suggest that Mrs. Harrison should go with him—the ea of it ! in a horrible little shack, *miles* from any-here—damp as a well, I shouldn't wonder, with no oper water or *sanitation* or anything. Did you ever ar of such a thing ? Naturally, Mrs. Harrison said e didn't think she would care about it—what did e man expect ? He didn't say anything more about *then*—I think I've taught him not to bully his wife hen I'm about !—but he took it out of her when they ent upstairs. She came in crying at 12 o'clock at night sleep with me because she couldn't stand it any nger. "My dear," I said, "why do you take any otice of it ? If he wants your company so badly, why n't he sacrifice himself for once and take you to ighton or Margate, or some nice, cheerful place ? He st likes to make people miserable, that's all." So then old her a little about what Dr. Trevor said about the ople who enjoy inflicting torture on others. I said, You must just look on it as a kind of disease and not sent it if you can help it. Build up a wall of protective ought about yourself and determine to be quite tached about it." We had a very interesting little lk about repressions, and I have lent her my hand-ok to Freud. It is so important to get a healthy gle on these things.

Mr. Lathom has been very nice, coming in almost ery evening to keep us company. It must be a relief him not to be bothered with the Bear's everlasting ivel about Art. He is going to paint our portraits.

Mrs. Harrison is going up for her first sitting to-morrow It is to be a blue, green and bronze colour-scheme— blue dress, green background and a big bowl of thos bronze chrysanthemums. It gave Mr. Lathom a grea deal of trouble deciding it. Of course, Mrs. Harriso is very attractive-looking, but you couldn't exactl call her *pretty*, with those greeny eyes and her rathe pale complexion. I haven't decided what to wear. asked Mr. Lathom, but he said he thought I shoul look nice in anything and he could safely leave it t me. I think I shall have it done in that orange thin with the square yoke—the one which Mr. Ramsbotton said made me look like a Pre-Raphaelite page—yo remember?—and have my hair waved and curle under all round to carry out the idea. I pointed out t Mr. Lathom that my face wasn't the same both side and he laughed, and said no human being ever was th same both sides—Nature never worked by rule an compass.

I am doing well with my stockings, and have ha several orders for scarves. Don't forget to tell anybod who wants one that I am quite ready to undertake th work. I am experimenting on some calendars, made lik the old-fashioned tinsel pictures, with the coloure paper-wrappers off chocolate creams. Some of th designs are simply beautiful. You might send me an you get. I think I might get some Christmas orders fo them. I've thought out quite an original idea. . . .

[The remainder of this letter, which contained onl some designs for needlework, has been detached.

. *John Munting to Elizabeth Drake*

15A, WHITTINGTON TERRACE

28.10.28

ARLING BUNGIE,

Just a line to say I am running down to Oxford to -y with the Cobbs for a week or two. It is simply possible to work in this place at the moment—the wnstairs menagerie swarms over us all day. This is e last time I'll think of setting up housekeeping with man on the strength of a school and restaurant quaintance. Of course, it's financially useful—but, mn it all ! money isn't everything, even when one's ping to get married. Lathom will insist on being a le ray of sunshine about the place. Damn sunshine. it hadn't gone joggling up the perfectly good and icid atoms in the primeval ooze, they would never ve sweltered up in this unsatisfactory world of life d bothersomeness.

The great idea now is to paint a portrait of Mrs. rrison as a surprise for Harrison on his return. owing Lathom's style, I should say it would be a y great surprise to him, indeed. It will probably be ery fine work—the man can paint—but I wish they ld get on with it quietly by themselves and leave me ne. That poisonous old woman is in and out the ole time. I daren't emerge from my own room for a nute without being collared and asked some imbecile stion or other. Impertinent old bitch. She's a dan- ous woman, too. In Harrison's place I'd give her sack. She had the damned sauce to edge into my m after me yesterday and ask whose photograph t was on my table, was it my best girl's ? I said, No was my last mistress but three or four, I had lost

count. (It was Brenda's, as a matter of fact.) I was told I was a dreadful man and that Miss Drake ought to know the way I behaved. I was furious. I don't know how the devil she got hold of your name. Lathom's damned chattiness, I suppose—confound him! She wound up the interview by saying, really, she didn't think it safe to be in the same room with me, and leered her way out. Disgusting fool! Fortunately, I was only revising "Birth and Childhood," or I should have been too irritable to work for the rest of the day. I hope, for your sake, I am not becoming neurotic—that would be the last straw.

Anyway, the Cobbs' invitation came at the exact right moment to prevent my doing something regrettable, so I'm barging off. Otherwise I should probably have had a row with Lathom, which would have been a nuisance, as I've paid the rent up to Christmas.

No news from Merritt yet. Probably he has slung the poor old MS. into a drawer and forgotten about it. It could write its memoirs by this time: *Pigeon-holes I Have Lived in.* How goes your latest?

My love to the Governor and everybody,

Your loving

18. Agatha Milsom to Olive Farebrother

15, Whittington Terrace, Bayswater

8.11.2[illegible]

Dearest Olive,

Ever so many thanks for sending the order from Mrs Pottersby; I will get on with it as quickly as I can. I have two more scarves in hand, and Mr. Perry want[illegible]

vo dozen calendars for people in the parish, so you e I am quite busy just at present. I am glad Tom's ieumatism is no worse, and that Joan's little illness rned out to be such a trifling matter after all. It must ive given you a lot of anxiety.

I am feeling very much better, I am glad to say— fact, we are all brighter and happier for our period peace and quietness. The Bear came back in quite good mood, for him !—and dear Mrs. Harrison seems ite a different person. She reads a lot, and I am couraging her to live in her books, and abstract her- lf altogether from the wearing and irritating realities life. It is easy, because she has a wonderfully vivid id romantic imagination, which makes the world of erature very real to her. Of course, that is what Mr. arrison would never be able to understand. It is hope- s to try to discuss anything with him. I tried to get m to talk about Gilbert Frankau's new book the other y. He said he hadn't read it and didn't want to. I ve him an outline of the plot, but I don't think he is listening. At any rate, he only said, " Oh ! " and nt on to talk interminably about his eternal fungi d hedgehogs. Still, provided he keeps his temper, it esn't much matter what he talks about, and Mrs. arrison listens to it all most patiently. I wonder how e can do it, but she is in a wonderfully serene and ppy frame of mind. I am rather proud of my work, I am sure it was our little talk in my bedroom the ier day that showed her the way out of her troubles. I am sorry for what you say about Ronnie. It is most ing for you that he should have got mixed up with at sort of girl, but no doubt it will all blow over. Dr. evor says that that kind of adolescent love-affair ould always be dealt with sympathetically, and will

work itself out naturally if not thwarted. I'm sure i would be *most unwise* of Tom to exert his authority i any way. I cannot forget how our poor dear Mothe *ruined* my life—of course, with the best intentions—b her old-fashioned ideas of what was "nice." Nobod will ever know what I suffered as a girl, and I am sur it is all due to that early unhappiness that I am in th doctor's hands now. It was not the same thing for you of course—you never had that complicated an delicately-balanced temperament, and would prob ably always have been happy enough, whether yo had married or not. People of your kind are much th most fortunate, but then one cannot help one's tem perament, can one? If you take my advice, and trea Ronnie with sympathy and indulgence, you will avoi making the mess of his life that our parents made o mine. I feel that Ronnie and I are very much akin— perhaps a few words from me would help to explai him to himself. I am writing to him to-night.

Your loving sister,

AGG

19. The Same to the Same

15, WHITTINGTON TERRACE, BAYSWATER

15.11.2

DEAR OLIVE,

I have been much surprised and deeply hurt b Ronnie's letter to me, which I enclose for you to se I cannot believe that he would have written in th spirit of his own accord. I can only suppose that yo and Tom have been prejudicing him against me. C

urse, he is your child and not mine, but it is quite nistake to imagine that, merely because of the physi- l accident of parenthood, you are, for that reason, vinely qualified to deal with a sensitive temperament e Ronnie's. I (not having my eyes blinded) can see ite clearly through what he writes, that you have cceeded in *apparently* bringing him into agreement th your point of view ; but, if you did but know it, u are merely encouraging him to repress his natural lings, with consequences which may be *terrible to con- iplate*. I can imagine nothing worse for him than iat you call change of scene and companionship, ien I know perfectly well that you mean that un- aginative and completely insensitive Potts person. I anot imagine a more dangerous influence for a boy Ronnie's state of mind than a footballing parson. e harm done by men of that class is quite incalcul- e, and their minds are, as a rule, perfect sinks of ngerous and sublimated libidos (I don't know ether that is the right way to spell the plural). How- r, it is your own affair, and I am powerless to erfere, but I do think you ought not to set the boy ainst me, merely because I am, unhappily, in a ition to know more than you do about certain ts of life.

Thank you, I am glad to say we are all very well. s. Harrison's portrait is finished. It is a very striking ce of colour. Of course, Mr. H. thinks it does not her justice, but then, as you would expect, he is te out of sympathy with modern art.

We are relieved from the presence of Mr. Munting, o has gone to Oxford, on a visit to some friends, so he says. I think it is much more likely that he eading a double life somewhere. He unblushingly

confesses to having innumerable disreputable entangle-
ments, and I am very sorry indeed for the girl he i
engaged to.

Your affectionate sister,

AGGI

20. George Harrison to Paul Harrison

15, WHITTINGTON TERRACE

20.11.2

MY DEAR BOY,

I was very glad to get your last letter—the one date
7th October—and to know that all goes on so well wit
you and the bridge. You took exactly the course
should have advised myself in the matter of the ma
Matthews. In such a case, consideration is out of place
Your duty to the firm (to say nothing of the thousand
who will use the bridge) must come before any sym
pathy for the man and his special circumstances. Fa
too much laxity is shown nowadays to outbreaks of so
called "temperament," with most disastrous con
sequences, and there is far too much talk about "no
being able to help one's self." I should not let the mat
ter prey on your mind in the least. I quite understan
that the man has brilliant powers and an attractiv
personality, and that you are sorry to lose him, but i
is fatally easy for a man like that to imagine that th
ordinary rules of morality do not apply to him, and t
indulge him in such ideas is bad for him, and ma
easily be ruinous to other people and to his work.
entirely approve your decision, and so, I am sure, mus
Sir Maurice, if the matter comes to his notice.

I am feeling greatly benefited by my little holiday, ıd am glad to be back to work again. I found all well home on my return. Margaret was in very good irits over a little surprise that she and Lathom had epared for me. She has been sitting to him for her ɔrtrait, and he has made a very striking piece of work it. While I cannot say I think it does her justice, ere is no doubt that it is a handsome piece of *colora-a*, and the kind of thing to attract attention at the esent time. Lathom belongs, of course, to the modern hool. He paints, I feel, in too much of a hurry, and s pictures have not the beautiful smooth finish of a illais, or, among living artists, of a Lavery—but no ubt he will grow out of this slap-dash method when is older It is a kind of affectation which besets the ung painters of to-day, and, while I cannot help but e the defects of his method, I am not blind to the erits of the work and to the kind thought which ompted the execution. He is anxious to show it at e Academy next year, and Margaret is (naturally, I ppose) delighted with the idea. I was obliged, how-er, to say that I did not care about the project. It is e kind of picture to attract a good deal of comment one sort and another, and these young people do t quite see the amount of undesirable publicity it ght involve. I fear they are both rather disappointed, t later on, when I was able to speak quietly about it Lathom alone, he saw the matter in the right light; d was very nice about it. We are hanging it in a od light in the drawing-room, where it will look y well.

There has been a very amusing sequel to this. Your friend (or should I say enemy ?) Miss Milsom has en it into her head that *her* fair features ought to be

immortalised, too! Lathom, with his usual extra ordinary good nature, has actually consented to mak a picture of her—but only on the understanding tha this time, if it turns out well, he shall have the right t do as he likes with it! Miss Milsom is only too en chanted at the idea of being hung at Burlington House I did not feel called upon to interfere, since he i obviously only "pulling her leg," and there is not th remotest chance of the portrait's being exhibited; for, a you know, the lady is scarcely the Venus of Milo! Sh is very much excited about it, and has produced th most incredible garment to be painted in—very tigh as to the bust and voluminous as to the skirt. I under stand that a quattrocento effect is aimed at.

I am very hard at work of an evening now—wit a number of sketches to work up and my little *opu* to prepare. I am illustrating it with water-colours o various plants and fungi in their natural habitat, an it should turn out a very pretty and useful volume.

I enclose the formulæ you asked for, and remain

Your affectionate

DA

21. Agatha Milsom to Olive Farebrother

15, WHITTINGTON TERRACE

22.11.2

DEAR OLIVE,

I have received your letter about Ronnie. No doub you think you know best. I will not allude further t the matter.

I am feeling *much* too upset to discuss such thing

now. Mr. Harrison has been behaving abomin-
y, undoing all the good his absence had done, and
ting his usual atmosphere of unpleasantness.
Ir. Lathom painted a most *beautiful* picture of Mrs.
rison. They both worked like galley-slaves to get
nished in time for his return (H.'s, I mean). I say
1, for sitting is most exhausting work, as you would
w if you had ever sat to anybody for a portrait, and
would end up sometimes so cramped she could
cely move. As for Mr. Lathom, he seemed quite
ired over it, and painted and painted away with-
food or rest, till I got quite worried about him,
had to bring him up cups of hot Bovril and Oval-
, for fear he should over-tax his strength. He is an
aordinarily generous young man, because, though
annot be well off, he actually painted the portrait
ive to Mr. Harrison, when I feel sure he could have
it for a big price, it is such a splendid piece of work,
he says himself it is one of the best things he has
done.
ell, they got it finished in time for the Bear's
rn, and Mrs. Harrison was ever so delighted with
nd thought the creature would be pleased. It was
e pathetic to see how eagerly she looked forward
rprising him, poor woman. Well, he was pleased,
is grudging kind of way, though he had the im-
inence to criticise the painting—as if Mr. Lathom
n't know more about Art with his eyes shut than
Harrison could learn in a month of Sundays. And
it was all spoilt by the Bear's horrible selfishness.
Lathom said—very nicely and courteously—he
d Mr. Harrison would see no objection to its
g sent to the Academy. Of course, as it was the
thing he'd done, you'd think anybody would see

he had a right to exhibit it, and you'd think, too, th
when anybody had received a valuable present li
that, he'd be only too willing to be obliging. But t
PIG just said, " Well, Lathom, I don't quite think
can go as far as that. My wife would hardly like to
put on show, you know."

I could see that Mrs. Harrison felt the discourte
to Mr. Lathom *dreadfully*, and she said at once s
would be quite pleased to let the portrait be show
and then he laughed—just laughed, as if it was of
importance to anybody, and said, " Oh, Latho
won't insist on making an exhibition of you, n
dear." I could see how vexed Mr. Lathom was, and
could Mrs. Harrison, and she begged and prayed hi
not to be so selfish and unkind, and Mr. Lathom spo
up and said, if Mrs. Harrison would like her portr
shown, surely he was not going to be a Victori
husband. Of course, that was unwise (as I could ha
warned him if I could have got the chance), and
had one of the worst rows even I can remember. M
Lathom couldn't stand it and went out of the room
disgust, and Mrs. Harrison cried, and her husband sa
the most insulting and unjustifiable things, ending
with : " Of course, if you want to make a public exh
bition of yourself you can. Do exactly as you like "
as though anybody *could*, when they had been spok
to like that about it. So that was the end of trying to
something to please one's husband ! It was a mo
miserable ending to the day we had all looked forwa
to with so much hope and pleasure.

For once Mrs. Harrison has taken a firm line wi
him and refuses to speak to him. It is a very uncon
fortable situation for me, and I am feeling very u
well. All my insomnia has come back, and so has t

ontrollable longing for shrimps. It is very tiresome
. disappointing.

Mr. Lathom has been perfectly sweet about it all.
went in to see Mr. Harrison when the uproar had
ned down a little, and, finding it impossible to
ve him, gave way gracefully. I was determined to
my best to make it up to him, so I went up and
how sorry I was, and added that I *insisted* that
should do exactly as he liked with my own portrait.
could show it anywhere he chose, I said, even if
liked to call it *Portrait of a Middle-aged Spinster*. He
ghed, and said he wouldn't think of calling it any-
ng of the sort, and he certainly wouldn't show it if
ould rather he didn't, and I said I was determined
should show it, whatever it turned out like. So he
, very well, that was a bargain, then. So we have
un the sittings. I am rather nervous about the
lt, because, as you know, I always photograph very
ly. But then a photograph cannot show the anima-
of the face as a portrait can, and people have so
n told me that my animation is what gives character
interest to my looks. I hope it will be a good like-
—perhaps you will say that if it is it won't be an
active picture, but Mr. Lathom seems very keen on
o perhaps it will turn out better than you, with your
rly prejudice, might expect.

am very tired with keeping the pose—I sat for two
rs this morning and again in the afternoon—so I
e I may get some rest to-night.

he scarf will be finished to-morrow, if I can get
right shade of silk for the fringe.

Your affectionate sister,

AGGIE

22. John Munting to Elizabeth Drake

15A, WHITTINGTON TERRACE

1.12.

BELOVED BUNGIE,

Here we are again ! Back home and full of beans ar fit to face anything, even Lathoms and Milsoms.

By the way, I've got to take back what I said abo Lathom. I'll forgive him anything for being such bloody fine painter. My God, he has made a fi thing of Mrs. Harrison—old Halkett would grunt his funny gruff way and say, " It's a masterpiece He wants to send it to the Academy (where it wou probably be the picture of the year, if the Committ didn't hang themselves in their own wires under t shock of seeing a decent bit of painting for once)- only, of course, those imbecile women have made hash of it and put Harrison's back up. Blether, bleth blether—rushing at the poor man with chatter abo newspaper sensations and standing under my portra on opening day, blah ! blah ! blah ! before the po man had finished reeling under the impact. Row, course. I told Lathom not to be a silly ass, and to and apologise quietly to Harrison afterwards and t him there wasn't the slightest intention of showing against his wishes. If he uses a little tact, the old b will take it for granted three months hence that t thing *is* going to be shown and imagine he suggested himself. I've got Harrison fairly well sized up, but h wife is a silly egoist, and Lathom has no practical sen at all as regards human relationships. Anyway, I ho the thing will be there, because I'd like you to see It's really first-rate. And revealing, my God ! only M H. doesn't see that, and I don't think Lathom realis it either.

've had a letter from Merritt—he "has read the k with much interest and would be glad if I could l time to call and discuss it with him at my con- ience." First time anybody's even offered to uss it. I suppose that if I will consent to cut out all "advanced" passages, and "brighten" the style give it a more "satisfactory" ending, he will sider doing something with it. Well, he won't get chance, that's all.

Thank Heaven, the *Life* is practically finished with. thankful to get rid of it. It has led me into reading t of scientific and metaphysical tripe which is of no to anybody, and least of all to a creative writer (a I have taken delight in rubbing in, in the course of work!). And the further you go with it, the worse it . Lucretius could make great poetry out of science, Bacon got some good work in on it—and even nyson could screw some fine lines out of an unsound ory of evolution and perfectibility and all the rest of But now, oh, heavens! after the bio-chemist, the hematician. What can you make out of the action of glands of internal secretion upon metabolism, or Pi the square root of minus one? Despair and a kind loomy grubbiness, that's all. I'd rather have a onian theology to make poetry of than all this ness of liver and gonads and the velocity of light. y the parson gets out of it by pretending that the olic Church knew all about it from the beginning, that inaccurate theological metaphors can be rpreted as pseudo-scientific formulæ, which is a lie. origin of life is our great stamping-ground for ission. You can't make life synthetically in a ratory—therefore he deduces that it came by ne interference! Rather an assumption! But,

after all, he is little worse than the men of scienc
" In some way or other, life came," they say. " Som
time, somehow, we may learn how to make it." B
even if one could learn to make it, that doesn't accou
for its having arrived spontaneously in the first plac
The biologist can push it back to the original protis
and the chemist can push it back to the crystal, b
none of them touch the real question of why or ho
the thing began at all. The astronomer goes back unto
millions of years and ends in gas and emptiness, a
then the mathematician sweeps the whole cosmos in
unreality and leaves one with mind as the only thi
of which we have any immediate apprehensio
Cogito, ergo sum, ergo omnia esse videntur. All t
bother, and we are no further than Descartes. Ha
you noticed that the astronomers and mathematicia
are much the most cheerful people of the lot? I su
pose that perpetually contemplating things on so va
a scale makes them feel either that it doesn't matter
hoot anyway, or that anything so large and elabora
must have some sense in it somewhere.

I wish I had Lathom's robust contempt for all th
kind of thing. His attitude is that bio-chemistry cann
affect his life or his art, so let them get on with it. I a
tossed about with every wind of doctrine, and if I'
not damn careful I shall end by writing a *Point Count*
point, without the wit. You can't really make a nov
hold together if you don't believe in causation.

Said a rising young author, " What, what?
If I think that causation is not,
No word of my text
Will bear on the next
And what will become of the plot? "

erhaps this accounts for my never having been able oduce a book with a plot—except, of course, the Merritt wants to see me about. And that was a sort reak book.

Well, never mind. Only a fortnight now and I shall seeing you. Praise God (or whatever it is) from (if ction exists) whom (if personality exists) all bles- s (if that word corresponds to any percept of ob- ive reality) flow (if Heraclitus and Bergson and stein are correct in stating that everything is more or flowing about).

Your ever faithful
JACK

The Same to the Same

4.12.28

GIE, DEAREST,

ast a line to say that the unexpected has happened ! ritt is all over the book ! ! ! Thinks it's the biggest g that ever happened, and has offered me a first- s contract (£100 advance, 10% to 500, 15% to o and 20% thereafter, with a firm offer for the next beginning at top previous rate), on condition he get it into print instanter to publish before the end an. The man's as mad as a hatter !

nearly sent round to get him certified, but instead id myself accepting the terms. When you consider frightful flop *Deadlock* was, you realise that the g is sheer stark raving madness, but who cares ? amn it, I always believed there was something in book, but I thought I was a fool to think so. But

how he can ever imagine that it will *sell*! . . . But that *his* funeral.

He says it must have a new title. Try and think something that will look well on a jacket, there's a ingenious cherub. It's fearfully urgent, because he got to get his travellers out with it at the beginning next month.

Lathom's portrait of Miss Milsom is the wickedest piece of satire you ever saw. She, fortunately, does not see it at all. In fact, she lugged the parson up to have look at it yesterday. Perry, though a parson, is no fool He looked grave, said that it was a striking picture, and added that Mr. Lathom had a great gift which should be put to great uses. Lathom grinned, and Miss Milsom began to babble about the Academy and Mrs. Harrison's portrait, at which Perry looked graver still I suppose he thinks that idiots should be charitably protected from themselves. Lathom is in wild spirits and is working like something inspired. *O si sic omnes* meaning me!

Jim reports that he is toiling away like stink and really sticking to it. I hope so. He will be at home when term ends, so you will meet the white-headed boy of the family. I trust you will be able to bear with us all. He is inflicting on us a friend of his who went down from Caius this year—man called Leader—one of those infernally high-spirited youths who bounce about over the shop like Airedale puppies—he rouses all my worst instincts, but is perfectly harmless. He is now in London, at St. Anthony's College of Medicine, and I suppose one of these days he will muddle through his hospital work and be turned out as a genial G.P.—"Dr. Leader is *such* a nice, cheerful man; he makes you feel better the minute he comes into the room." I ha

erful people. Still, he and Jimmy will amuse one ther, and we shall have a chance to get off on our a bit.

less you, Bungie ! I am counting the days till we et.

Your own
JACK

George Harrison to Paul Harrison

15, WHITTINGTON TERRACE, BAYSWATER
20th December, 1928

DEAR BOY,

line at Christmas-time to send our best love, and ay that all our thoughts are with you. Next Christ-, if all goes well, we shall have you back, and things seem more like themselves. Here, of course, a sad low is cast on our festivities by the illness of the g. There are distressing rumours, but I feel great fidence that he will pull through in the end.

n spite of this feeling of depression and anxiety, we e decided to make a little jaunt over to Paris. garet has seemed rather restless lately, and I think small excitement will do her good. I am such a t sort of old fellow, that I fear she finds her life a e dull at times. A visit to the "gay city" will set up again, and it will be beneficial to me, too, to be en out of my rut. We shall be staying at the Hotel oria-Palace in the Rue —— ; it is a pleasant, ectable place, and not dear, as Paris hotels go. We l do a theatre or two and perhaps go up to Mont-tre to see the "night-life" one hears so much about.

Young Lathom says he may be running over to Pari for a few days, and, if so, will look us up and show u round the town. It is kind and attentive of him, and we shall appreciate having an up-to-date cicerone, fo my own memories of Paris are very antiquated, and I expect everything is very much changed.

I was very glad to hear that your work was pro gressing so well and that your action in the matter o the man you dismissed was approved of. Leniency i such a case is always a mistake, as I have found fro bitter experience.

We are doing better over here than we had reall any right to expect under the present depressed con ditions. I think we shall secure the contract for th Middleshire High-Power Station. If so, that will mea a big job, which will probably take me away fro London in the spring.

I am really wondering whether, before this happen I ought not to take some steps about replacing Mis Milsom by somebody who would be a more suitabl companion for Margaret. Miss Milsom has alway seemed to me a very tiresome woman, and lately sh has been getting altogether above herself. She consul these psycho-analytical quacks, who encourage her t attach an absurd importance to her whims and feeling and to talk openly at the dinner-table about thing which, in my (doubtless old-fashioned) opinion, ough only to be mentioned to doctors. Besides, she is ver lazy and untidy, and, instead of putting her mind t the housework, she litters the place with wool and bi of paper which she calls "art-materials," and sh borrows my paints and forgets to return them. There no harm, of course, in her doing needlework an making calendars, if it does not interfere with h

ies, but she has frequently been very impertinent
en I have had occasion to speak about the unsatis-
tory cooking. Lathom has been painting a picture
ner—a very clever thing, certainly, but it seems to
e turned her head completely. However, Margaret
hes to be kind to the woman, and says, truly, that
would find it hard to get another post, so perhaps
ill be better to put up with her a little longer and
if the situation improves. She is certainly most
l and devoted to Margaret, and that outweighs a
t many drawbacks.

Well, I must not worry you with these small domestic
ters. I hope that you will be enjoying a very happy
istmas in your exile, and that our little offerings
e arrived quite safely. By the way, your Plum-
ding was not, I can assure you, an example of Miss
som's culinary genius. I attended to that important
ter myself—otherwise you might have found many
nge things in it—such as glass beads or stencil-
shes ! The calendar, however, was all the lady's own
k. She wonders regularly every day whether you
like it, and whether your colleagues will think it
painted for you by your fiancée. She means kindly,
r woman, so, if you have not already expressed your
ty delight, pray do so, and assure her that the
terpiece has an honoured place on your walls.

With much love,

Your affectionate

DAD

Note by Paul Harrison

can find only one letter for the next few weeks with
important bearing on the subject of this inquiry.

My father and step-mother were in Paris from the 15t of December to the 7th of January. I received a fe picture post-cards with accounts of places visited, bu they contained nothing of any moment, and I did no preserve them.

Lathom joined them on or about the 28th c December, and spent the Jour de l'An in their com pany. I believe that Mrs. Harrison wrote several lette to Miss Milsom from Paris, but these I have been unabl to secure ; in fact, I am informed that they have bee destroyed. I visited Miss Milsom (see my statemer No. 49), and questioned her as tactfully as possible o the subject, but could only get from her a ramblin diatribe, full of the same demented prejudice she ha always displayed against my father, and, in th absence of any direct evidence (such as the origina letters would have afforded), I feel bound to ignore he remarks. Indeed, it is obvious that nothing whic Miss Milsom says *later* than April, 1929, is of an evidential value whatsoever, and that *all* her statement without exception, must be received with extrem caution, except in so far as they tend to prove th influence exerted, consciously or unconsciously, by he upon my step-mother.

Mr. Munting, who spent the Christmas season wit his family and in the company of his fiancée, no returning to town till the 15th of January, has hande to me the only letter which he received from his frien during this period.

Harwood Lathom to John Munting

POLPERRO

4th Jan., '29

AR MUNTING,

Iow are you? And how did the season of over-
ling and Christian heartiness leave your soul? Did
iourable love survive the domesticities? If so, I
ar that you and your intelligent young woman are
ier gods or beasts. Gods, probably—with that dread-
temperateness of the knowledge of good and evil,
ng two sides to every question. You will analyse
r bridal raptures, if you have any, and find the
ole subject very interesting. You will have, Heaven
o you! a sense of humour about the business, and
r friends will say how beautiful it is to see such a
sense of partnership between a man and woman.
opulation of politic tape-worms! But where is the
of being offensive to a man who will allow for my
it of view? I hate being allowed for, as if I were
incalculable quantity in an astronomical equation.
Laving (thank God!) no family, except my aunt at
chester, I escaped good King Wenceslas and de-
ed for Paris, where everything is jejune enough,
the weather just as snow-bound and bitter as in
own happy island, but where at least the stranger
ot sucked into the *vie familiale*. I found the Harrisons
ually vegetating in a highly respectable Anglophile
l, and toted them round the usual stale shows,
ing my pleasure from their naïve enjoyment. Or,
ny rate, from *her* enjoyment; the old boy was as
vish as ever, and brought the blush of shame to
cosmopolitan cheek by walking out of a cabaret
ie middle, trailing his wife and friend after him in

the approved barn-door style. Being too wrathful f speech, I said nothing, and had the pleasure of sittir out a family row in the taxi afterwards. *La belle Ma guerite* was actually quite as shocked as he was, po child, but thrilled to an unregenerate ecstasy neverth less. She has the makings of a decent pagan soul if o could teach her. However, I needed to do no teachin His vulgar disgust (with which, if he had had the el mentary tact to leave her alone, she would have agree drove her into an excited opposition, and she argue the point with an obstinacy and wholeheartedne which it was a pleasure to listen to. I wouldn't appealed to—I didn't want a row, and besides, s will learn nothing except by arguing it out for herse In fact, I apologised and said, in effect, that an art became rather blind to the proprieties, legs, as the bu conductor said, being no treat to him. In fact, I co trolled myself marvellously, and—went away a walked about in a fury all night !

After that we did picture-galleries, and I had listen to Harrison's lectures on art. Never have I hea —not even in Chelsea—so much jargon applied over grisly a substructure of ignorance and bad taste. T man ought to be crucified in the middle of all his ow abominable daubs. You would have enjoyed it, I su pose, or made copy of it.

We saw the New Year in with dancing and the usu imbecile festivities. Mrs. H. thanked me with tears excitement in her eyes—it was pathetic—like givi sweets to a kid. Even H. was a little moved from h usual grimth. I procured him a partner—no ! I didn hire her, I knew her—a decent little soul who used live with Mathieu Vigor and is now, I believ Kropotzki's *petite amie*—and she trundled him rou

the most amiable way. He emerged from the fray ite sparkling (for him!), and solemnly led Madame t for the next dance! That didn't go so well, because found fault with her steps, so I pushed him back to Fleurette, who could dance with a kangaroo, hink, clever little devil.

crossed on the 2nd, and came down here for warmth d sunshine (what a hope!). The place has been ned, of course, by "artistic" tourists, and is lousy h Ye Olde Potterye Shoppes. The brave fisher- n dangle around in clean blue jerseys and polish the boats in the harbour, while they long for the n-season to start again.

shall be back in Bayswater some time next week. ope your sense of humour is feeling robust, for I in a foul mood and nothing pleases me.

Yours ever,
LATHOM

John Munting to Elizabeth Drake

15A, WHITTINGTON TERRACE, BAYSWATER

The opening sheets of this letter are lost, but the e is evidently some time in January.]

. proofs coming along at express speed, I am en- ng a magnificent illusion of importance and y-ness. The novel will be out before the *Life*, ch is being held up considerably by copyright hers over the plates. All the better, as it is a mis- e to bung two books out right on top of one another.

I am feeling a great deal more sympathetic wit
Lathom just now. The earnest Harrison has tran
ferred his attentions, for the moment, to me, becaus
as a literary man, I can, of course, tell him exact
how best to prepare his fungus-book for the pres
He comes teetering in at my busiest moments t
discuss points of grammar. I tell him my opinic
and he contradicts it at great length, pointing ou
subtletics in his phrasing which I have not graspe
At length I either tell him that his own original ide
expresses his personality best, or fall back on *T*
King's English if the error is really too monstrous t
let pass. This works all right for a time, and he carri
the book off with much gratitude—returning late
however, with the demurrer to Mr. Fowler careful
written down on paper. I once made the foolis
suggestion that he should write to Fowler and thras
it out with him direct ; this was fatal, as I had t
listen to (*a*) the letter ; (*b*) the reply ; (*c*) the rejoinder-
so I now fall back as a rule on the phrase about expres
ing personality. There was also a dreadful day whe
a water-colour picture of fungi came out too gree
by three-colour process. Lathom and I suffered dread
fully over this abominable toadstool, and were a
length forced to go out and drown the recollection i
Guinness.

All the same, I try my best to be helpful, becaus
I am the only person who can enter into Harrison
interests, and he has really written a very entertainin
little piece of work, full of odd bits of out-of-the-wa
knowledge, scraps of country lore and queer old
fashioned recipes and things. He must have mad
extraordinary good use of his holidays and there
not a plant or animal in the country fit for food tha

: doesn't know the last word about. He has made wonderful collection of botanical diaries, which ought be of considerable scientific value, and he brings really scholarly mind to his rather unscholarly bject. His water-colours, though too prim consid-ed as pictures, make really rather attractive book-ustrations, and his drawings of plants and fungi e beautifully accurate in line and colour—far better an the stuff you find in the usual text-books. And, deed, the vagaries of the three-colour process are ough to make Job irritable. I told him that he should ke as his motto for the book the famous misprint the Bible, " Printers have persecuted me without cause "—which pleased him.

Profiting by my position as literary guide and mentor, have (with colossal tact) persuaded him to let the nous portrait be shown. We got round to it by way cookery, oddly enough. I said that cookery was ally a very important creative art, which was not perly understood in this country, being chiefly left the hands of women, who were not (pardon me, ngie) as a rule very creative.

That led on to a general discussion of Art, and the arning that every creative artist feels to obtain a blic response to his art. And so, by devious ways, Lathom and his picture. I said that, while I entirely derstood Mrs. Harrison's quite natural feeling it to exhibit her portrait would be, to a great extent, nibiting herself, to Lathom it was, of course, quite a ferent matter. It was his work, his handling of e and colour, for which he wanted public recognition. t I admitted that a woman could not be expected appreciate this point of view.

As I had foreseen, Harrison took this as an indirect

criticism of his wife, and promptly reacted against it. She was not, he said, like the ordinary woman. She had a remarkable gift for artistic appreciation. He felt sure that if he put it to her in the right light, she would see that it was not a personal question at all. Indeed, she had made no objection herself—it was he who had been afraid of exposing her to unwelcome notoriety. But it should be made quite clear that the painting was the important matter, and that the subject had no personal bearings of any kind.

It was very odd, Bungie, to see him reassuring himself in this vicarious way. And it was still odder that I had a feeling all the time as if I was doing something unfair. His attitude about the thing was preposterous, of course, but I have a queer feeling about Mrs. Harrison. She isn't so stupid that she can't see Lathom's point of view. It would matter less if she were. It is that she is clever enough to see it and adopt it when it is pointed out, and to make it into a weapon of some kind for something or other. Not knowing that it is a weapon, either; practising a sort of ju-jitsu, that overcomes by giving way—good God! what a filthy bit of obvious journalese metaphor!

Anyhow, Mr. Harrison worked off my little lecture on the creative artist with great effect under my very nose the same evening, as though it was all his own work. Mrs. H. started off with her usual lack of tact by saying: "I thought you said," and "I don't want to discuss it," but, catching my eye, resigned herself to listen graciously and give consent. So the Hanging Committee is, after all, to have the happiness of gazing upon the portraits of Mrs. Harrison and Miss Milsom—blest pair of sirens—and I hope they will be duly appreciative. Lathom is pleased—and so he

.mn well ought to be ! I hope it will calm him down, : what with the portraits and the fungus-book and e thing and another, he and I are both getting into state of nerves.

I want peace and quiet. Damn all these people ! Thank eaven I've got the proofs to see to, because I'm no fit state to write anything. My ideas are all side down. I can't focus anything. I suppose it's t the usual " between-books " feeling. I am going take a few weeks' lucid interval and read astronomy physics or something. Personally, I'm dead sick the blasted creative instinct !

Yours all-of-a-dither, but still devotedly,

JACK

The Same to the Same

15A, WHITTINGTON TERRACE, BAYSWATER

1st February, 1929

NGIE, MY DARLING,

What, in God's name, are you going to do with me get jealous and suspicious ? Or I with you, if it pens that way ? I ask this in damn sober earnest, girl. I've got the thing right under my eyes here, I know perfectly well that no agreement and no mise made before marriage will stand up for a gle moment if either of us gets that ugly bug into blood.

You remember—months ago—I passed on a cheer- little matrimonial dialogue that took place by the brella-stand. To-night we had the pleasure of ring the thing carried on to the next stage.

Harrison had the brilliant idea of inviting Lathom

and me to dinner to taste his special way of frying chicken. Well, there we all were—Miss Milsom frightfully kittenish in a garment she had embroidered herself with Persian arabesques. ("I don't know *what* they mean, you know, Mr. Munting. Probably something frightfully improper! I copied them off a rug.") Harrison, who allows nobody to penetrate into "his" kitchen when he's working out a masterpiece, was frying away amid a powerful odour of garlic. No Mrs. Harrison! We furiously make conversation—enter H.—gives a black look round, and disappears again. I count the things on the mantelpiece — two brass candlesticks, brass door-knocker representing the Lincoln imp—two imitation brass mulling-cones — ill-balanced pottery nude — quaint clock and pair of Liberty nondescripts. Front door goes. Kitchen door in the distance heard to burst open. "Well, where have *you* been?" Awful realisation creeps over us all that the sitting-room door has been left open. I say hurriedly: "Have you read the new Michael Arlen, Miss Milsom?" We are all aware that a prolonged cross-examination is proceeding. Lathom fidgets. Voice rises to appalling distinctness: "Don't talk nonsense! How *long* were you at the hairdresser's?—Well, what *were* you doing?—Yes, but *what* kept you?—Yes, of course, you met somebody. You seem to be meeting a lot of people lately —I don't care who it 'only' was—one of the men from the office, I suppose—Carrie Mortimer? nonsense!—I shall *not* be quiet—I shall talk as loudly as I like—Did you or did you not remember——?" Here I grow desperate and turn on the gramophone. In comes Harrison, putting a good face on it. "Here's the wife, late as usual!" We sit down to dinner in

ıbarrassed silence. I murmur eulogies on the chicken. Over-cooked," says Harrison, shovelling it all aside d savagely picking at the vegetables. After this, erybody is afraid to eat it, for fear of not seeming know good food from bad. "It seems delicious me, Mr. Harrison," says Miss Milsom, profiting thing from long experience. "Oh," says Harrison, ırly, "you women don't care what you eat. It's erdone, isn't it, Lathom?" Lathom, quite helpless :h rage, says in a strangulated voice, that he thinks just right. "Well, you're not eating it," says .rrison, gloomily triumphant. By this time everydy's appetite is taken thoroughly away. There ıothing on earth the matter with the chicken, but all sit staring at it as though it was a Harpagusst of boiled baby.

Well, I'll spare you the rest of the nightmare. The nt is that *this* time, Mrs. Harrison didn't come in oblingly eager to say where she had been and what had been doing—and that *next* time the alibi will d water—and then Harrison will start saying that can't trust women, and will very likely be perfectly ified.

ungie—I *see* how these things happen, but how does insure against them? What security have we that —you and I, with all our talk of freedom and frankɜ—shall not come to this?

ove makes no difference. Harrison would cheerfully for his wife—but I can't imagine anything more nsive than dying for a person after you've been e to them. It's taking a mean advantage. And what's good of it all to him, if he loves her so much that ything she says gets on his nerves? I like Harrison think he's worth a hundred of her—and yet, every

time there's a row, she ingeniously manages somehow to make him appear to be in the wrong. She is completely selfish, but she takes the centre of the stage so convincingly that the whole scene is engineered to give her the limelight for her attitudes.

This house is becoming a nightmare ; I shall have to chuck it, but I must stay on till Easter, because the rent is paid up to the quarter and I can't afford to lead a double life and Lathom can't manage more than his own share. Hell !

I to Hercules comes out next month. I hope old Merritt won't be let down over it. He continues to be enthusiastic. Senile decay, I should think. Well, we'll hope for the best. If my Press is as good as yours I shan't complain, my child.

Your envious

JACK

29. Note by Paul Harrison

It is unfortunate that throughout this important and critical period, from the end of November to the end of February, we should have no help from the Milsom correspondence. It seems that Miss Milsom and Mrs. Farebrother had a renewed quarrel during the Christmas period, on the subject of the youth Ronnie Farebrother, mentioned in former letters, and that as a result they remained for some time not on speaking or writing terms. Mr. Munting's letters also contain no references to my father's domestic affairs during the month of February—no doubt because he was preoccupied with his own private concerns.

During the last week of January, the wretched young

arebrother shot himself. This gratifying fulfilment of er prophecies of disaster seems to have driven Miss ilsom into a highly hysterical state of mind, which obably precipitated the mental collapse that followed. er correspondence with her sister (which was then sumed) is therefore quite useless for evidential purses. We can, therefore, only guess at the development the situation between my step-mother and Lathom uring February—the month in which my father's uties took him away from home for fourteen days, in onnection with the electrical installation in Middlehire. In view of the extraordinary incident which nally broke up the two households, it is, however, not fficult to form a correct opinion.

. John Munting to Elizabeth Drake

15A, WHITTINGTON TERRACE, BAYSWATER

17.2.29

ARLING BUNGIE,

You have seen the reviews, of course ! Bless my eart and soul, what has happened to the people ? Of ourse, it was all started by that tom-fool speech at the uildhall (I don't know why Cabinet Ministers should e the only people who can sell one's books for one owadays)—but oh, my lights and liver ! Oh, goroo ! oroo ! The silly mutton-headed G.P. is walking into ne blooming shops by thousands and *buying* the thing ! *aying* for the thing. Shoving down their hard-earned even-and-sixpences for it ! Lord help us—what have done that I should be a best-seller ? Is thy servant tripe-hound that he should do this thing ? First dition sold out. Presses rolling out new printings day

and night—Merritt nearly off his head and saying, " told you so." Blushing author besieged in his charmin Bayswater flat (! ! ! !)—Remarkable portrait of blush ing author by that brilliant young artist Mr. Harwoo Lathom (done in a fit of boredom one afternoon whe the model hadn't turned up) being scrambled for b four Press agencies, two literary hostesses and a American lion-tamer ! Everything gas and gaiters Worm-like appeals, from publishers who turned *Hercule* down, for the next contract but seven, and the *Wa* and the *Blues* and the *Depress* and all the Sunday Blood yapping over the 'phone for my all-important, inspire and inspiring views on " What does the Unconsciou mean to me ? "—" Is Monogamy Doomed ? "—" Ca Women tell the Truth ? "—" Should Wives Produc Books or Babies ? "—" What is wrong with the Moder Aunt ? "—and " Glands or God—Which ? "

Bungie, old thing, it all seems absolutely ghastly an preposterous, but the blasted book is BOOMING— and—shall we get married, Bungie ? Will you take th risk on the strength of one fluky Boomer (which ma perfectly well be a Boomerang and prevent me fro ever writing anything worth doing for the rest of m life), and a set of contracts which I may go mad wit inability to fulfil ? Because, if you will—say so, m courageous infant, and we will tell your Uncle Edwar to put up the banns, and prance off hand in hand ou own primrose way to the everlasting bonfire.

Pull yourself together, Jack Munting !

Bungie, I've never told you how jealous I wa because your books sold and mine didn't. If I tell yo so now, don't remember it against me. Parson Per says confession is a good thing. Perhaps he's right. confess it now—and now forget it, there's a good girl

erhaps even now it only means that my wretched book howlingly bad. I always comforted myself with thinkıg that I *must* write better than you to be so unıleable—but I'm filthily pleased and cock-a-hoop all ıe same.

Pull yourself together, Jack Munting! You are becoming ysterical. Your glands are functioning madly in the rong places, and your Unconscious has come unstuck! Anyhow, I'm going to have quite enough to depress ıe to-morrow. That crashing nuisance, Leader, has ıddenly discovered that he knows the fellow who's ritten the book of the season, and is coming along to Look me up, old boy, and celebrate!"

There was a young student of Caius
Who passed his exams with a squaius,
Ere dissecting at St. Bartholomews
Inward St. Partholomews, such as St.
Heartholomews,
To discover the cure of disaius.

Oh, well, I suppose one of the penalties of success is ıe way it brings you in touch with your friends. I ıd an invitation to dine from the Sheridans last week. Such a long time since we met, isn't it?" I will see it that it shall be longer still.

Well, let me know about the matrimonial outlook, ›n't you? I have a great many important engage-ents, of course, but I daresay I might be able to : this little matter in somewhere!

Yours *pomposo e majestuoso*,

JACK

.S. You need not trouble to make it a quiet one. I ın easily afford a top-hat—in fact, several.

31. The Same to the Same

15A, WHITTINGTON TERRACE

20.2.29

DARLING BUNGIE,

Glory, alleluia ! Then we will be married at Easter Curse Uncle Edward's scruples ! I could make you just as good a husband in Lent—but, as you say, it's a shame to upset the old boy. Now that the remote prospect has really come so (comparatively) near, I feel all wobbly and inadequate. It's like bracing your muscles to pick up a heavy bag and finding there's nothing in it. One thought it was years off—and here it is—and there it is, and that's that.

Well !

Well, we are going to be married at Easter.

Well—it will be a good excuse for refusing silly invitations. No time. Frightfully sorry. Going to be married at Easter, you know. A lot to do. Ring. Best man. Bridesmaids' presents and all that. Excuse me old man, I've got to see my tailor. Cheer-frightfully-ho don't you know.

I couldn't get rid of Leader that way, though. He was horribly hearty and stayed a very long time, and insisted on Lathom's and my going down to the College to see over the labs. and " meet a few of the men," who all hated me at sight, by the way, when they *did* see me I thought the sooner we got it over the better, so we went this afternoon. Lathom is in one of his vagrom moods—doing no work, and catching at any excuse to waste time. I tried to get out of it, but no ! I " absolutely must come, old man." I take it the idea was to impress Leader's friends with the idea that men of intellect are proud to know him. It had not occurred

) me that best-selling had such idiotic accompani-
ıents.

Leader was in his element, of course, showing off his alf-baked knowledge, and exhibiting fragments of natomy in bottles. I can see Leader one of these days s the principal witness at an inquest, frightfully slap-ash and cock-sure, professing that he can tell the time f the murder to within five minutes by taking half a lance at the corpse, and swearing somebody's life way with cheerful confidence in his own infallibility. le was highly impressive in the dissecting-room, but t his best, I think, displaying his knowledge of poisons vhich, by the way, they seem to keep handy on the ɔen shelves for any passing visitor to help himself to). ie was very great on synthetic drugs—all made on the remises out of God knows what, and imitating nature) abominably — abominably well, that is — that ıemical analysis can't tell them apart. Indeed, in-eed, sirs (and apart from the wearisomeness of Leader), ıt this troubles me. Synthetic perfumes from coal-tar re bad enough, and synthetic dyes, and I can put up ith synthetic camphor and synthetic poisons, but hen it comes to synthetic gland-extracts like adren-in and thyroxin, I begin to get worried. Synthetic tamins next, I suppose, and synthetic beef and ıbbages—and after that, synthetic babies. So far, ɔwever, they don't seem to have been able to make nthetic life—the nearest they have got is stimulating ɔg-spawn into life with needles. But what of the years come? If, as the bio-chemists say, life is only a very mplicated chemical process, will the difference etween life and death be first expressible in a formula ıd then prisonable in a bottle?

This is a jolly kind of letter to write to you, old girl,

on this auspicious occasion, but this everlasting questior of life and the making of life seems to haunt me—and it is, after all, not so remote from the problem o marriage. We can pass it on and re-continue it, bu what is it? They say now that the universe is finite and that there is only so much matter in it and nc more. But does life obey the same rule, or can it emerg indefinitely from the lifeless? Where was it, when th world was only a dusty chaos of whirling gas and cinders? What started it? What gave it the thrust the bias, to roll so ceaselessly and so eccentrically? To look forward is easy—the final inertia, when the las atom of energy has been shaken out of the disintegratin atom—when the clocks stand still and time's arrow ha neither point nor shaft—but the beginning!

One thing is certain. If I begin to think like this I shall never write another best-seller. Heaven pre serve us from random speculation! Our own imme diate affairs are as important as the loves of th electrons in this universe of infinitesimal immensities and as far as we are concerned . . .

[The remainder of this letter, being of a very intimat nature, is not available.]

32. The Same to the Same

SMITH'S HOTEL, BLOOMSBURY

25.2.2

DEAREST,

Just a hasty line to say that I have had to leav Whittington Terrace on account of a very unfortunat

ıcident, which I will tell you about later on. I am ere for a few days till I can get my belongings moved ut and warehoused somewhere *pro tem.*

It is all extremely tiresome. However, it only means ıat we shall have to do our house-hunting a little ırlier than we expected. I think I had better run ɔ to Kirkcudbright and have a yap with you about , if I can get away from publishers and agents.

All my love,

JACK

. Agatha Milsom to Elizabeth Drake

15, WHITTINGTON TERRACE, BAYSWATER

25.2.29

EAR MADAM,

You will probably be very angry at what I am ing to say, but I feel it is my duty to warn you ainst Mr. John Munting. Girls do not always know w men go on behind their backs, and it is only ght they should be told by those who have had *fortunate experience* of these men's real character.

You may think that Mr. Munting is honourable, ıt he has been turned out of this house on account indecent behaviour, and your eyes ought to be ened to his goings-on. You may believe me be- use I have the best right to speak of what *I know.* have no doubt he will tell you that this is all false d try to pull the wool over your eyes, but I have *oof* of what I say, and if you should want further idence you can write to Mr. Harrison at this address, d he will tell you that every word is true.

I am sending you this warning for your good because you ought not to marry a man like that ; he is not fit to marry a decent woman. You are young and you do not know what the consequences may be of marrying a man of depraved habits. This is one incident I can tell you about of my own knowledge but *there are others*, or why does he so often come in late at night ?

Do not tell him I have written to you, as it is no a pleasant thing to have to do, and naturally I do not care to write or talk about it in detail. But ask him why he was ordered out of the house, and do not believe the excuses he makes, because everybody here knows the truth and could tell it if necessary.

Now for your own sake pay attention to what I say and have no more to do with that disgusting man. I know I shall get no thanks for doing my duty, but in this world one must not expect gratitude. I have already been deprived of my livelihood and made to suffer mental and financial persecution on this man's account. However, I bear no malice, and remain

Your sincere well-wisher,

AGATHA MILSOM

34. Elizabeth Drake to John Munting

[Endorsed on the above.]

DEAR JACK,

What on earth is all this about? Is the woman mad ?

Yours, in all confidence and love,

E

5. *Telegram from John Munting to Elizabeth Drake, dated* 26.2.29

A little mad and quite mistaken. Do not worry. m starting North to-night.

JACK

6. *George Harrison to Paul Harrison*

27.2.29

[Y DEAR PAUL,

I have to inform you of a most disagreeable incident hich has caused a disturbance in our family life, id in consequence of which I have had to turn that an Munting out of the house. It occurred while was unfortunately obliged to be absent over the iddleshire Electrical Installation, and, but for the cidental intervention of Miss Milsom, Margaret might ve been exposed to an annoyance and risk that I udder to think of.

I was summoned home by an urgent and rather coherent letter from Miss Milsom, accusing Munting an indecent assault upon herself. You will natur-y understand that I found this rather difficult to lieve, since the man (to do him justice) had shown signs of being actually demented. By the same st I received a letter from Margaret, written in eat mental distress, and begging me to take no tice of Miss Milsom, on the ground that she was ffering from delusions. Obviously, whatever was e truth of the matter, it was necessary that I should ervene, and I hastened home at once (at a most

inconvenient moment of my work, but, fortunately the greater part of the contract was settled, and Freeman is quite competent to carry on).

On arriving, I immediately interrogated Miss Milsom closely. Her story was that, on the night of the 22nd, at about 12.30, she had felt a sudden craving for sardines (the woman is certainly unbalanced) and had gone downstairs to ransack the larder. She came up again in the dark—knowing the house well she did not trouble to turn on the light—and was just entering her bedroom, which, if you remember is next to ours, when to her alarm she heard somebody breathing quite close to her. She gave some sort of exclamation and tried to get her hand on the landing switch, but encountered the hand of a man. Thinking it was a burglar, she started to scream, but the man gripped at her arm and said in a whisper, "It's all right Miss Milsom." She clutched at his arm, and felt what she at once recognised as the sleeve of Munting's quilted dressing-gown, which he frequently wears when doing his writing. She at once asked him what he was doing on her landing, and he mumbled something about fetching some article or other from his overcoat on the hall-stand and missing his way in the dark. She expostulated, and he pulled her away from the lighting-switch, saying, "Don't make a disturbance—you'll alarm Mrs. Harrison. It's quite all right." She told him she did not believe him, and according to her account, he then made advances to her, which she repelled with indignation. He replied "Oh, very well!" and started off upstairs. She went back and turned the light on in time to see the tail of the dressing-gown disappearing upstairs. Thoroughly frightened, she rushed into my wife's bedroom, and

ad an attack of hysterics. Margaret endeavoured
soothe her, and they spent the rest of the night to-
ether. The next night, Miss Milsom summoned up
ourage to remain in her own room, bolting the door.
Margaret did the same, and they suffered no further
sturbance.

I then questioned Margaret. She was, naturally,
ery much upset, but thought that Miss Milsom was
ompletely mistaken, and making a mountain out
a mole-hill. She is too innocent to see—what I,
course, saw very plainly—that this shameless attack
as directed against herself and not against Miss
ilsom. I did not suggest this to her (not wishing to
arm her), and promised to hear Munting's version
the affair before taking any further steps.

I then interviewed Munting. He took the thing
the worst possible way—with a cool effrontery
hich roused me to the highest pitch of indignation
-treated the whole matter as a triviality, and posi-
vely laughed in my face. "The woman is demented,"
e said, "I assure you my tastes do not lie in *that*
irection." "I never supposed they did," I answered,
nd made quite clear to him what my suspicions
ere. He laughed again, and said I was mistaken.
said I knew very well that I was *not* mistaken, and
ked him what other explanation he could offer
being found outside my wife's door in the middle
the night. "You have heard the explanation,"
id he, airily. "And a very convincing one it is,"
id I; "at least, you don't deny that you were there,
suppose?" He said, "Would you believe me if
did deny it?" I said that his manner had convinced
e that the story was true, and that nothing he said
ould persuade me to the contrary. "Then it's not

an atom of use my denying it, is it?" said he cooll
"Not an atom," I said. "Will you leave the hou
straight away or wait to be kicked out?" "If yc
put it that way," said he, "I think it would cau
less excitement in the neighbourhood if I went of m
own accord." I gave him half an hour to be out
the house, and he said that would suit him very wel
and had the impudence to request the use of ou
telephone to order a taxi. I told him I would n
have him in our part of the house on any pretene
whatever. "Oh," said he, "then perhaps you woul
be good enough to order the taxi yourself." I di
so, in order to give him no excuse for hanging abou
the place, and he took himself off. On the way dow
stairs he said, in a more subdued tone, "Look her
Harrison. Won't you believe that this is all a mistake?
I told him to get out of the house before I sent for th
police, and he went without another word.

All this has upset us very much. I am only thankf
that no further harm has come of it. Margaret sa
he had never previously offered her any rudenes
and I believe her; but, looking back on the matte
I can remember occasions when I have not altogethe
cared for the tone of his conversation. He is too ex
perienced a man in this kind of thing, however, t
have shown his hand while I was there. I am onl
sorry that our friendship with young Lathom, whon
we all like so much, should have led to this unpleasan
ness.

Lathom is extremely distressed, as you may imagin
I thought it well to warn him to show more discretio
in future with regard to his choice of friends. He wa
too genuinely horrified and unhappy to wish to tal
about the matter; still, I think he was grateful for th

vice. Unhappily, this means that we shall lose him well; since his means do not permit of his keeping the upper maisonnette by himself. I suggested that might stay till the end of the quarter, but he said at he was engaged to visit some friends next month, d would be leaving anyway at the end of the week. This incident has made it very clear to me that Miss lsom must be got rid of. She is in a state of violent steria, and is obviously subject to delusions about rself, and in no way a fit companion for Margaret. ave given her a month's salary in lieu of notice, and it her home. Out of all this hateful episode this one od thing has come : that I have now a valid reason insisting on this woman's departure.

Other news has been rather over-shadowed by these xieties, and must wait till my next letter. I hope all well with you.

Your affectionate

DAD

Statement of John Munting

It was a mistake from the very beginning for Lathom d myself to set up housekeeping together. It happened purely by chance—one of those silly, unnecessary ances that set one spinning out cheap platitudes out fatality and the great issues that hang upon an cidental meeting. It used to be considered highly philosophical to indulge in speculations about coidence, still more to base any work of art upon it—t that was in the days when we believed in causality. w, thanks to the Quantum theory and the second

law of thermo-dynamics, we know better. We know that the element of randomness is what makes the Universe go round, and that the writers of sensation novels are wiser in their generation than the children of sweetness and light.

All the same, there still remains an appearance of causation here and there, and I persist in attributing some of the blame to the imbecilities of the public-school system. If Lathom had not worn an old Wincastrian tie I should never have spoken to him in the little restaurant Au Bon Bourgeois in Greek Street. Or, at the most I should have asked him to pass the French mustard. As it was, my natural aversion to my fellow-creatures being broken down by Burgundy, I was fool enough to say : " Hullo ! you come from the old school, I see. Did I know you ? "—and was instantly swamped and carried away in the flood of Lathom's expansiveness.

Lathom is an incorrigible extravert. His thyroids and liver function with riotous vigour. He beams out enthusiastically upon the world and is refracted out from everything and everybody he meets in a rainbow of colour. That is his fatal charm. In the ordinary way I am ill-adapted for prismatic function. That evening was an unfortunate exception. I couldn't keep it up afterwards ; that was the trouble.

When Lathom mentioned his name I recognised it at once. He is six years younger than I am, and was an obnoxious brat in the Upper Third when I was preparing for Oxford in the Sixth, but he had penetrated to my Olympian seclusion in virtue of his reputation.

Lathom, of course—Burrage's celebrated fag, who scrounged toasting-forks. He was always in trouble with the other prefects for his apparent inability to distinguish other people's property from Burrage's. I

ıything was wanted, he took it ; if anything had to e done, he did it, regardless of other people's con- enience, or, indeed, of his own. He was attached to urrage, who naturally stood up for him. In fact, I ink we were all jealous of Burrage for having a fag ruthlessly competent. Burrage patronised the kid in s large, appreciative way, and Lathom basked in the ys of Burrage's approval. I don't blame Burrage together, but he certainly spoilt Lathom. He pro- cted him from the consequences of his actions. Per- aps Burrage had advanced ideas about the non- istence of causation and imparted them to Lathom. ut Burrage was rather an ass, and his reactions were obably more human and immediate.

Lathom was saved from disaster, partly by Burrage ıd partly by Halliday. Halliday was a great man and ptain of the First Eleven. He took things easily and hen he said that the kid was just potty we all accepted e explanation. That was on the day of the picnic, hen Lathom turned up at feeding-time without his ercoat, and said he had thrown it away because it ot in his way. The weather turned to soaking rain ıd Lathom got pneumonia and nearly died. We were l rather frightened and distressed, and when Lathom rned up next term we made allowances for him. I minded Lathom that we had called him " Potty," ıd he laughed and said we were perfectly right.

I remembered, too, that in those days Lathom had rned a reputation for himself by making caricatures the masters. This fascinating gift had earned him ill more toleration. I was not surprised to hear that had become an artist. He said he was looking for studio, and had seen just the thing in Bayswater, only couldn't afford to take it.

I asked, why Bayswater, of all places? Why n Chelsea or Bloomsbury? But Lathom said no, th rents were too high, and besides, Chelsea and Bloom bury were hopelessly arty and insincere. They lived second-hand and had no beliefs. To see life lived i the raw, one ought really to go to Harringay or Too ing, but they were really not central enough. Bayswat was near enough to be convenient and far enough o to be healthy suburban.

" The suburbs are the only places left," said Lathon " where men and women will die and persecute f their beliefs. Artists believe in nothing—not even art. They live in little cliques and draw the fashio able outlines in the fashionable colours. They can love—they can only fornicate and talk. I've had som And the aristocracy has lost the one belief that mad it tolerable—it's belief in itself. It's fool enough to pr tend to believe in the people, and what is the good an aristocracy playing at being democratic? And th people . . ." He made a violent gesture. " Cheap scie tific text-books—cheap atheism—cheap sociology cheap clothes—your blasted educationists have le them no beliefs at all. They marry, and then th woman comes howling to the magistrate for a separatio order on any pretext, so as to get money for nothin and go to cheap dance-halls. And the man goes yel ing away for a dole to shuffle all his responsibilities o to the State. But the blessed people of the suburbs they do believe in something. They believe in Respec ability. They'll lie, die, commit murder to keep u appearances. Look at Crippen. Look at Bywater Look at the man who hid his dead wife in a bath an ate his meals on the lid for fear somebody should su pect a scandal. My God! Those people are living, livin

th all their blood and their bones. That's reality—in
e suburbs—life, guts—something to chew at, there ! "
At the time I was rather struck by this.
It ended, of course, in my consenting to share the
aisonnette with Lathom. An hour earlier, the very
ord would have put me off, but under the spell of
thom's enthusiasm, and stupefied with food and
blic-school spirit, I began to think there was really
mething raw, red and lifelike about living in a mai-
nnette with an Old Wincastrian. And perhaps
thom was right after all. The trouble is that raw,
l life is possibly better seen at second-hand. A good
ll-life of a piece of rump-steak has none of the oozing
mminess of the real thing.
I wish, all the same, that I had tried to play up to
thom better. It was irritating, of course, to find that
was still regardless of other people's convenience.
did not object to his bagging the best room for his
dio—that was in the bond—but it was tiresome to
ve him overflowing into my room all day when I
s at work. Lathom is one of those spasmodic workers
o need constant applause and excitement. He would
rk like fury for several hours, snarling at me if I
me in to retrieve a garment or lighter that he had
rrowed ; but, the fit over, he would wander in to
ere I was grimly struggling with a knotty piece of
ography and talk. He talks well, but his interests are
sided. He is a real creator—narrow, eager, head-
g, and loathing introspection and compromise. He
estions nothing ; I question everything. I am only
ni-creative, and that is why I cannot settle and dis-
ss questions, as he does, in one burst of inspired in-
ht or equally inspired contempt. Lathom is all light
d dark—a Rembrandt. I am flat, cold, tentative,

uneasily questioning, a labourer in detail. I caught no fire from Lathom, and I quenched his. It is my disease to doubt and to modify—to be unable to cry at a tragedy or shout in a chorus. It was my fault that I did not help Lathom more, for, just because of my uneasy sensitiveness, I understood him far better than he ever understood me. It would have suited him better if I had violently disagreed with him. But I had the fatal knack of seeing his point and cautiously advancing counter-arguments, and that satisfied neither of us. I see this now, and, indeed, I saw it then ; it is characteristic of people like me to see a thing and do nothing about it.

This, of course, was where the Harrisons came in. I liked Harrison. If I had not liked him, I should not be making this statement, which is, I am afraid, entirely contrary to the public-school tradition. Harrison was a man of very great sincerity, no imagination and curiously cursed with nerves. It is all wrong for a man of his type to have nerves—nobody believes or understands it. In theory, he was extremely broad-minded, generous and admiringly devoted to his wife ; in practice, he was narrow, jealous and nagging. To hear him speak of her, one would have thought him the ideal of chivalrous consideration ; to hear him speak to her, one would have thought him a suspicious brute. Her enormous vitality, her inconsequence, her melodrama (that is the real point, I think), got on his nerves, and produced an uncontrollable reaction of irritability. He would have liked her to shine for him and for him only ; yet a kind of interior shyness prompted him to repress her demonstrations and choke off her confidences. " That will do, my dear " ; " Pull yourself together, my girl," checked a caress or an enthusiasm ;

grunt, a " Can't you see I'm busy," a " Why have you uddenly got these ideas about " music or astronomy r whatever the latest interest might be. Into the uffling of his outer manner, her radiance sank and as quenched. Yet to others he spoke with earnest pride f his wife's brilliance and many-sided intelligence.

Harrison's instinct was to dominate, but by nature nd training he was unfitted to dominate that particu- ar woman. It could have been done in two ways— y capturing the limelight, or by sheer physical exuber- nce. But neither of these things was in his power ; he as inexpressive and sexually unimaginative, as so any decent men are.

He had his means of self-expression : his water- olours and his cookery. It was his misfortune that in ie former he should have been weak, conventional nd sentimental, and bold and free only in the latter. believe, indeed, that all the imagination he possessed an to the composition of sauces and flavourings. It surely a matter for investigation whether cookery not one of the subtlest and most severely intellectual the arts ; else, why do its more refined manifestations ppeal to women hardly at all and to men only in their ter and more balanced age ? Unlike music or poetry painting, food rouses no response in passionate and notional youth. Only when the surge of the blood is uieted does gastronomy come into its own with hilosophy and theology and the sterner delights of the ind. If Harrison could have made a big public splash ith anything, she could have understood that and reened herself happily as the wife of a notoriety. But ie had no eyes for the half-lights.

At first it was amazing to me that Lathom showed so uch patience with Harrison. Lathom is a barbarian

about food and magnificently intolerant of bad pain
ing. Twaddle about Art and Atmosphere got short shri
with him. Yet he let Harrison bore him to any exte
with his prattle and his picturesque bits. Harrison di
indeed, treat him with a deference flattering in a ma
of his age, but under ordinary circumstances that wou
merely have infuriated Lathom, who, to do hi
justice, is no drawing-room lion. It was not that Har
son provided the response which I gave so awkwardl
In time I realised that, though I had my selfish reaso
for refusing to see it. Mrs. Harrison was the radia
prism for Lathom's brilliance, and Lathom use
Harrison in that service as carelessly as in the old da
he had used the prefects' toasting-forks. He saw th
tool ready to his hand and took it, without shame ar
without remorse.

I have put all this down, as I saw it, without co
sideration for the feelings of anybody. It is useless
blame people for their peculiarities of temperamen
At the time I did not interfere, because, to tell the trut
I was working hard and involved in my own concern
and did not want to be bothered with Lathom's affair
Besides, I rather prided myself on a cynical detachmen
in such matters. As it turns out, I should have done fa
better to preserve this cheerful selfishness throughou
That I did not was again due to sentimentality an
public-school spirit, and I am heartily ashamed of i

I suppose I must say something about Mrs. Harriso
It is difficult, because I both understood and dislike
her. Just because she had no use for me, I was detache
enough to see through her. I have not the superb an
centralised self-confidence that could strike the colou
from her prism. I come back to that image, because
expresses her with more accuracy than any descriptio

y diffusion left her dead glass. But in Lathom's ncentration she shone. He gave her the colour and lendour her dramatic soul craved for. She saw herself bed with all the glowing radiance that dazzled her lf-educated eyes in the passionate pages of Hichens d de Vere Stacpoole. I hardly think she was wicked I do not think she had any moral standards of her n. She would adopt any attitude that was offered to r, provided it was exciting and colourful enough. I nk she had enjoyed herself at her office ; she had liated there in the little warmth of popularity which vays surrounds people of abundant physical and iotional vigour, but at home she had only the devo- n of Miss Milsom, with her warped mind and rilous pre-occupations. She visualised herself into : character of a wronged and slighted woman, be- ıse that was the easiest way to evoke clamorous ponse from Miss Milsom—and, of course, from thom when he came along.

It is rather surprising, I feel, that Harrison was never lous of Lathom, as he was of every other man, luding myself. I fancy it was because he looked on thom as his own friend, primarily. Now I come to nk of it, it was of his wife's personal life that he s jealous—her office, her interests, the friends she d made for herself—everything that had not come her through him. My position was different. He trusted me because of my work and opinions. I had itten an unpleasant book and I had no definite moral gments. From such a man, nothing but impropriety ıld be expected. He was wary and uneasy in my sence. He could talk food with me, and did, but y, I think, in despair for want of other appreciation. was fearfully lonely, poor soul, and I failed him

miserably. And he was jockeyed by me into letting his wife's picture be shown at the Academy—but only because he thought I was belittling his wife's character. His change of mind was a chivalrous rush to her defence. I was pleased with myself at the time, I remember; I suppose my light-hearted diplomacy was about as disastrous as diplomacy usually is. What devilish things we do when we try to be clever. After all, Harrison probably understood his wife only too well, but he could not bear that anyone should suspect the clay of his idol. He destroyed himself rather than let her down. I rather think that Harrison had something heroic behind his primness and his gold spectacles.

There was one thing which I ought most certainly to have left severely alone, and that was the final disaster, in which Miss Milsom was concerned. For once I was seized with the idiotic whim to play the martyr and the noble-spirited friend. At the very moment when my reasonable and deliberate policy of detachment should have come to my aid, I must choose to take the centre of the stage and indulge in high-mindedness.

Lathom woke me up. He came and sat on my bed and I noticed with irritation that he had been borrowing my dressing-gown again. He always took things.

"I'm in a mess," he said.

"Oh?" said I.

He told me what had happened. I have seen Miss Milsom's account. It is accurate in all points but one. Far from repulsing Lathom, she had encouraged him. He had broken from her at the foot of the staircase with considerable difficulty. He was filled with a righteous disgust, which struck me as funny under the circumstances.

" Disgusting old woman," said he.

" True," said I. " None should have passions but ıe young and the beautiful. What are you going to ɔ ? Serve with Leah seven years in the hope of getting achel in the end ? "

" Don't be filthy," said he. " There will be a row ɔout this, I'm afraid."

" Very likely," said I. " But that is your affair."

" Not altogether," said Lathom. " You see, she thinks was you."

" Me ? " I was considerably taken aback.

" Yes. You see, I had your dressing-gown——"

" So I observe."

" She recognised the feel—the quilting, you know—amn it all, she rubbed her ugly face in it——"

" Really ! " I said, " the kittenish old creature."

All the same, I was not pleased. Gestures which elight in the right person are so indecent when perrmed by the wrong. In fact, it is only when we conmplate the loves of unpleasant people that we see the decency of passion. It is disgusting to think of the norous transports of, let us say, Mr. Pecksniff. rotesque characters only exist for us from the waist ɔwards.

" I suppose," I went on, " it didn't occur to you mention that you were not me ? "

" I didn't say anything. I got away. I didn't want make a noise. In fact . . ."

In fact, he had made use of me cheerfully enough, ıd was now wondering whether I should put up ith it.

" Look here," I said, " what do you intend to do ? you want to carry on an intrigue with Mrs. Harrison, tell you, frankly, I'm going to get out and leave you

to it. It bores me and I don't care about these alarm and excursions. Anyhow, why don't you leave th woman alone? You're doing her no good."

Then he exploded and started to tramp about. Sh was the greatest miracle God had ever made. The were meant for one another. They had got into eac other's blood and all the rest of it. That, of course Equally, of course, if Harrison had been a decent sor of man he would have sacrificed his own feelings. (A if Lathom had ever thought of sacrificing anything. But Harrison was a brute, who did not appreciate th wonderful woman who had been entrusted to him Lathom could suffer himself, but he could not bear t see her suffer. It was all so damned unjust. The ma was not fit to live. He deserved to be murdered for hi rotten paintings, let alone for his cruelty to his wife. An to think that his revolting hands should have th right . . .

And so on.

It is so very odd that in moments of excitement w should all talk like characters in a penny novelette However long one lives, I suppose it always strike one with the same shock of surprise.

"That'll do," I said at last. "We can take that a read. If Mrs. Harrison feels as you do about it——"

He interrupted me to assure me at unnecessar length that she did.

"Very well," I said, "why not do the decent an sensible thing and take her away? You won't fin this kind of backstairs intrigue permanently inspiring you know. Besides, it seems to be the kind of thin you do very badly."

"I wish to God," replied Lathom, "that I coul take her away. Heaven and earth, man, do you thin

wouldn't do it like a shot if I had half a chance? t she won't hear of it. She's got some poisonous idea out not making a scandal. It's this damned awful urban respectability that's crushing the beautiful out of her. When you see what she was meant to be ree and splendid and ready to proclaim her splendid ssion to the world—and then see what this foul ghter has made of her——"

'Well, there you are," said I. "That's the raw, red of the suburbs, as per specification. That's what you me here for, isn't it? Look here, Lathom, buzz off d let me get to sleep, there's a good chap. You can w your feelings off in the morning."

'Oh, all right." He got up from the bed and hesied at the door. "I only thought I'd warn you," he ded, a little awkwardly, "in case the old woman s anything to you."

'Dashed good of you," I said dryly. "What am o do? Make love to the confidante while you make e to the mistress, and go stark mad in white linen?"

'Oh, you needn't bother to do that," said he. "I uld just treat the whole thing as a joke. Or, if makes a fuss, apologise and say you were a bit ewed. I'll back you up."

I was so infuriated with him for shoving the responsiity on to me in this light-hearted way that I told n to clear out, which he did.

As a matter of fact, I rather under-estimated the iousness of the thing. I mean, I did not realise the gths to which Miss Milsom's resentment might go. etermined merely to avoid the woman in future, and, fact, treat the whole episode as if it hadn't occurred. hought Lathom had received a salutary shock and ful lesson on the difficulties attending suburban

love-affairs, and that he might bethink himself and stop the whole thing before it had gone too far. A good thing, too. I was clearing out and getting married at Easter, and there, so far as I was concerned, was an end of it. Lathom could fish it out for himself after that. My book had made a sudden success, and I was feeling rather cock-a-hoop with myself.

Consequently, I was quite unprepared for the arrival of Harrison with his accusation. He was dead-white with fury and intensely quiet. He did not offer me a single opening by scattering his usual fiery particles of rage. He put the accusation before me. Such and such things had been stated—what had I to reply? I tried to dismiss the thing with airy persiflage. He was not abashed by my assumption of ridicule. He simply asked whether I denied being on the landing at that time, and, if not, what I was doing there. When I refused to answer so absurd an accusation, he told me without further argument, to leave the house. His wife must not be subjected to any kind of disagreeable contact. The mere fact that I could take such an attitude to the matter (and, indeed, my attitude had nothing dignified about it) showed that I was an entirely unsuitable person to come into any sort of contact with Mrs. Harrison. He was there to protect her from persons of my sort. Would I go quietly or wait to be removed by force?

The deceived husband is usually considered to be a ridiculous figure, but Harrison was not ridiculous. Sometimes I wonder whether he was deceived. I thought at the time that he was, but perhaps the light of faith in his eyes was really the torch of martyrdom. It is fine to die for a faith, but perhaps it is still finer to die for a thing you do not believe in. I do not know.

e baffled me. If the garrison was disarmed and beaten
hind that impenetrable façade, I was never to know
Nobody would ever know it.

It is ironical that Lathom, coming to Suburbia to
d raw, red life, should have failed to recognise it
ıen he saw it. It was there, all right, in this dry
tle man, with no imagination beyond beef-steak and
ıshrooms, but it did not wear bright colours, and
thom liked colours. The thing was farcical. And
elieve I was the most farcical fool in the whole out-
Even then, the mocking censor which views one's
rsonality from the outside sat sniggering in a corner
my brain. Here was I, a successful novelist, presented
th this monstrous situation—one which was quite
my own line of work, too—and I hadn't even had
e wits to see it coming. The thing was a gift.

I could see myself tackling it, too, in quite the right
dern, cynical way. No nonsense. No foolish shib-
leths about honour and self-sacrifice. A lucid ex-
sure of the situation—an epigram or so—a confronta-
n of Harrison (as representing the old morality) with
e unsentimental frankness of the new.

And the damnable thing was that I didn't do it.
ıen it came to saying, "My good man, you are
staken. My friend Lathom is the man you ought
be after. He and your wife are carrying on a love-
air, for which you are largely to blame, if, indeed,
y blame attaches to these unsophisticated manifesta-
ns of natural selection"—when it came to the point,
lidn't say it. Looking at Harrison, I couldn't say it. I
ıaved like a perfect little gentleman, and said nothing
atever.

After that, I can only suppose that I became quite
oxicated by this new and heroic view of myself.

I went straight off to Lathom and told him about it. I oozed priggishness. I said :

" I have stood by you. I have kept silence. I have agreed to leave the house at once. But I will only do it if you will promise me to chuck the whole business—clear out at the same time that I do. Leave these people alone. You have no right to ruin the life of this decent man and his wife, who were getting along quite well in their way till you came along."

I grew solemn and portentous about it. I enlarged on Harrison's sufferings. I painted a vivid picture of the miseries the woman must needs undergo in the course of a secret love-affair. I called it vulgar. I called it wicked and selfish. I used expressions which I thought had perished from the vocabulary since the 'eighties. And I ended by saying :

" If you do not promise me to do the decent thing, you cannot expect me to stand by you." Which was mere blackmail.

There must be more of the old inhibitions alive in even the most modern of us than one would readily credit. Lathom was actually abashed by my eloquence. He protested at first ; then he grew sulky ; finally, he was touched.

" You're quite right, old man," he said, " damn it. I've been behaving like a cad. I couldn't make her happy. I ought to go away. I will go away. You've been damned decent to me." He wrung my hand. I clapped him sentimentally on the shoulder. We wallowed in our own high-mindedness. It must have been a touching sight.

The first disagreeable consequence of this foolish interference with the course of events arrived in the shape of a letter from my fiancée. Miss Milsom had felt

her duty to send one of those warnings. I dashed up
Scotland to put matters right. The greatest compli-
ent I can pay to the open mind and generous
ommon sense of Elizabeth is to say plainly that I
ad no difficulty about doing this. But I was reminded
ith a slight shock that Victorian quixotry has a way
landing one in complications. However, no harm
ppeared to be done, and, later on, I received a letter
om Lathom, dated from Paris, in which he informed
e that he was playing the game (the words were proof
themselves of the condition to which I must have
duced him), and that, after a highly emotional
ene, Mrs. Harrison and he had agreed to part.

I got married soon after that, and forgot all about
athom and the Harrisons—the more so as Elizabeth
d not encourage me to dwell on the subject. A natural
alousy, I thought, particularly as she had not seemed
together impressed by my quixotic gesture. But
omen are unconquerable realists, and nowadays they
e not taught to flatter male delusions as they once
ere. It is uncomfortable to think that perhaps our
pressed Victorian ancestresses were as clear-sighted
their franker granddaughters. If so, how they must
ve laughed, as they made their meek responses. In
is century we do know, more or less, what they are
inking, and meet them on equal terms—at least, I
pe we do.

I was reminded of Lathom by receiving my ticket
r the Private View at the Academy on May 3rd. We
d had our honeymoon, and were ready to return to
r places in the world. Almost the first thing I saw,
we surged through the crowd, was the painted face

of Mrs. Harrison, blazing out from a wall full of civi worthies and fagged society beauties, with the lou insistence of a begonia in a bed of cherry-pie. Ther was a little knot of people in front of it, and I recog nised Marlowe, the man who paints those knotty nude and created a sensation two years ago with "Th Wrestlers." He was enjoying his usual pastime of bein rude to Garvice, the portrait-painter. His voic bellowed out over the din, and his black cloak flappe gustily from a flung-out arm. "Of course you don' like it," he boomed lustily, "it kills everything in th place dead. That's none of your damned art—that's painting—a *painting*, I tell you." Several pained peopl who had been discussing values in low tones, shran at the unseemly noise, and dodged waveringly fro the sweep of his hairy fist. "None of you poor pimples, went on Marlowe, threateningly, "can *see* colour—c thickness—you're only fit to colour Christmas cards a twopence a hundred. There isn't a painter in the whol beastly boarding-house crowd of you except this chap. I will do Marlowe the justice to say that, except wher nudes are concerned, he is singularly generous to th younger men. He glowered round through his bus of beard and spectacles, and caught sight of me "Hullo, Munting!" he bawled. "Come here. Some body said you knew this fellow Lathom. Who is he Why haven't you brought him round to see me?"

I explained that I had only just returned from m honeymoon, and introduced Marlowe to my wife Marlowe roared approval in his characteristic way, an added:

"Come along on Friday—same old crowd, you know and bring this man Lathom. I want to know him. H can *paint*."

He spun round to face the picture again, and the owd retired precipitately to avoid him.

" Well," said a man's voice, almost in my ear, " and w do you think it looks, now it's hung ? "

I spun round and saw Lathom, and with him, before could adopt any suitable attitude to the situation, r. and Mrs. Harrison, flung up from the waves of htseers like the ball from a Rugby scrum.

Retreat was hopeless, because Marlowe now had e tightly by the shoulder, while with his other hand sketched large, thumby gestures towards the portrait indicate the modelling and brushwork.

" Hullo, Munting ! " said Lathom.

" Hullo, Lathom ! " I said, and added nervously, Hullo-ullo-ullo ! " like something by P. G. Wode-use.

" Good God ! " exploded Marlowe, " is this the man ? ie man and the model, by all that's lucky," he llowed on, without waiting for my embarrassed swer. " I'm Marlowe ; and I say you've done a od piece of work."

Lathom came to my rescue by making a suitable knowledgment of the great man's condescension, and was sidling away with a vague bow and a muttered mark about an engagement, when I felt a tap on the oulder. It was Harrison.

" Excuse me one moment, Mr. Munting," said he. A row in the Academy would have its points from e point of view of my Press agent, but I was not xious for it. However, I asked Elizabeth to wait a oment for me, and stepped aside with Harrison.

" I think," said he, " I am afraid—that is, I feel I e you an apology, Mr. Munting."

" Oh ! " I said. " That's all right. I mean, it doesn't

matter at all." Then I pulled myself together. "I'm sorry," I said, "it's my fault, really. I ought not to have come. I might have known you would be here."

"It's not that," he said, determined to face it. "The fact is—I fear I did you an injustice that—er—that last time we met. Er—the unfortunate woman who made all the trouble——"

"Miss Milsom?" I asked; not because I didn't know, but to help him on with his sentence.

"Yes. She has had to take a rest—in fact, to undergo a course of treatment—in fact, she is in a kind of nursing-home."

"Indeed?"

"Yes. There can really be no doubt that the poor creature is—well, demented is perhaps an unkind way of putting it. Perhaps we had better say, unbalanced."

I expressed sympathy.

"Yes. From what my wife tells me—and Mr. Lathom—and from what I hear from the poor creature's relatives, I now feel no doubt at all that the—the accusation, you know—was entirely unfounded. A nervous delusion, of course."

"Yes, yes," said I.

"I quite understand, of course, your very chivalrous motives for not putting the blame on her at the time. The position was most awkward for you. You might perhaps have given me a hint—but I perfectly understand. And my wife, you will realise, was so very much upset——"

"Please," I broke in, "do not blame her or yourself for a single moment."

"Thank you. It is very kind of you to take it in this reasonable spirit: I cannot say how much I regret the misunderstanding. I hope you are very well and

rosperous. You are quite a famous man now, of course. nd married. Will you do me the honour to present me your wife? I hope you will come and see us some ay."

I was not keen to make the introduction, but it ould scarcely be avoided. The preposterous situaon was there, and had to be imagined away. Mrs. arrison glowed. For the first time I saw her in full rismatic loveliness, soaked and vibrating with colour nd light. I asked her what she thought of the show.

"We haven't seen much of it yet," she said, laughing, we came straight to see *the* picture. Is it going to be e picture of the year as they call it, do you think, r. Munting?"

"It looks rather like it," said I.

"Fancy that! It does make me feel important—ough, of course, I don't count for anything, really. he painting is the thing, isn't it?"

"The subject of the portrait counts for something. o," said Elizabeth. "I don't see how anybody can ake a picture of one of those cow-faced people. xcept a satirical one, of course. It's the painter's b to get the personality on the canvas, but what is e to do if there is no personality? Mr. Lathom . . ."

She looked at the portrait, and then at Mrs. Harrison, nd something seemed to strike her. It was the thing at had struck me, months before, when I first saw hat Lathom had made of it. She grew a little consed, and Lathom struck in.

"Mrs. Harrison and you would agree about the nportance of subject-matter," he said. "I can't ersuade her to admire Laura Knight."

Mrs. Harrison blushed a little.

"I think they are very clever pictures," she said,

a trifle defiantly, and with a side-glance at her hu
band, " but they are rather peculiar for a woman t
have painted, aren't they? Not very refined. An
I mean, they are so unnatural. I'm sure people don
walk about, even in their bedrooms, like that, wit
nothing on. And I think pictures ought to make on
feel—uplifted, somehow."

" Come, come, Margaret," said Harrison, " yo
don't know what you are talking about."

" But you said the same thing yourself," she cam
back at him.

" Yes, but I don't care about your discussing ther
here."

" Oh ! " said Marlowe, loudly, " you are afraid
the flesh. That is our trouble—we are all afraid
it, and that is why we insist and exaggerate. ' *H
est corpus*,' said God—but we turn it into hocus-pocu
There's no hope for this generation till we can se
clean flesh and ' sweet blood '—Meredith's phrase—
without being shocked at its fine troublesomeness.
one were to strip all these people now "—he wave
a hand at a fat man in a top-hat and an emaciate
girl, who caught his eye and stood paralysed—" yo
would think it indecent. But it's not as indecent a
the portrait-painter who strips their souls for you
Some men's work would be publicly censored, if th
powers knew how to distinguish between flesh an
spirit—which, thank God, they don't." He clappe
Lathom on the shoulder. " How about that othe
thing of yours, my boy? "

Lathom laughed a little awkwardly.

" Is that the portrait of Miss Milsom? " I inte
rupted, hastily—for I saw trouble coming up like
thunder-cloud over Harrison's horizon. " We must g

d have a look at it. You're doing pretty well to ve two pictures in such a crowded year. We mustn't ep you too long. Which room is it in, Lathom?"

He told us, and when we had said our farewells, rsued us into the next room.

"I say, old man," he whispered breathlessly, "I ldn't really help this. Couldn't in decency get out t, could I?"

"No," said I, "I suppose you couldn't. It's not my eral, anyhow."

"It's the first time we've met," he went on, "and vill end here."

"But for my damned interference it wouldn't have un here," I answered. "I'm not blaming you, hom. And I've really no right to make condi- ns. I don't think it's wise—but I can't set up to a dictator."

"Oh, you admit that, do you?" said Lathom. "I'm ner glad to know it." He hesitated, and added uptly, "Well, so long."

was thankful to see the end of the episode. From ry point of view it seemed advisable to drop all nection with Lathom and the Harrisons, and I none of them again until the 19th of October.

Margaret Harrison to Harwood Lathom

May 4th, 1929

RA DARLING,

Oh, how wonderful it was, darling, to see you again, n under the Gorgon's eye—such a cold stony eye, ling, and with all those people round. I had been

dead all through those dreadful months. When you went away, I felt as if the big frost had got right into my heart. Do you know, it made me laugh when the pipes froze up in the bathroom and we couldn't get any water and He was so angry. I thought if he only knew I was just like that inside, and when the terrible numb feeling had passed off, something would snap in me, too. Was that a foolish thing to think, Petra? Not a very poetical idea, I am afraid, but I wished I could have told it to you and heard your big, lovely laugh at your Darling Donkey!

Oh, Petra, we can't go on like this, can we? I couldn't go through those long, long weeks again without seeing or hearing you, not so much as your dear untidy writing on an envelope. And, darling, it was so dreadful to hear you say you couldn't work without your Inspiration, because your work is so wonderful and so important. Why should He stand between you and what God meant you to do? The life we live here is so cramped and useless; the only way I can fulfil any great purpose is in being a little help in your divine work of creation. It is so wonderful to know that one can really be of use—part of the beauty you make and spread all about you. It isn't even as if I counted for anything in *His* work. A woman can't be an inspiration for an electrical profit and loss account or a set of estimates, can she? He doesn't think so anyway. He just wants to have me in a cage to look at, darling—not even to love. He doesn't care or know about love—thank God! I say now, because I can keep myself all for my own marvellous Man. Oh, I have so much to give, so much, all myself, such as I am—not clever, darling, you know I am not that, though I love to hear about clever, interesting things

-but loving and real, and *alive* for you, only you,
arling, darling Petra. I never knew how much
eauty there was in the world till you showed it to
e, and that's why I feel so sure that our love must
e a *right* thing, because one could not feel so much
eauty in anything that was wrong, could one? Fancy
ing on living for years and years, starved of beauty
nd love, when there is all that great treasure of happi-
ess waiting to be taken. Oh, darling, he was going
n at dinner last night about how his grandfather
ved to be a hundred, and his father ninety-four,
nd what a strong family they were, and I could see
em, going on year after year, grinding all the happi-
ess out of their wives and families and making a
sert all round them, just as He does. I looked up
rgons in a book, darling, and it said they were
mortal, all except the one Perseus killed, and I'm
re they are, darling, the stony horrors. Sometimes
wish I could die. Do you think they would let me
me and be near you after I was dead? But I know
u think we don't live after we are dead, but just
rn into flowers and earth again. It does seem much
re likely, doesn't it, whatever the clergymen say
so I suppose it would be no good me dying, would
? Just think—only one life, and to be able to do
thing with it—nothing at all, and then just die
d be finished. It makes me shudder. It's all so
ld and dreary. What right have people to make life
ch a wasted, frozen thing? Why are they allowed
live at all if they don't *live* in the true sense of the
rd? And life can be such a great thing if it is really
ed. Oh, Pet darling, thank you for having taught
e to live, even if it was only for a few short, wonderful
eks! When I'm all alone (and I'm always alone,

nowadays, not even poor Aggie Milsom to talk t
now), I sit and try to read some of the books yo
told me about. But I stop reading, and my min
wanders away, and I'm just living over again th
hours we had together, and the feel of your dear arm
round me. Sometimes he comes in and finds me lik
that, and scolds me for letting the fire out and nc
putting the light on. " You're always mooning about,
he says, " I don't know what you think you're doing.
Oh, darling, if he only did know, how angry he woul
be and how wicked he would think me in his ugl
little mind !

Dear one, you won't leave me all alone again, wi
you ? We said we would try to forget one anothe
but I think you knew as well as I did how impossibl
it was. Well, we have tried, haven't we, and we'v
found it is no good. You thought it would be bette
for me, but it isn't. I feel far, far more miserable tha
I did, even in the days when we were seeing eac
other and trying to keep down all the things we wer
thinking and feeling together. I would rather suffe
the awful pain of seeing and wanting you, than feel s
dead and empty, as if my heart had been all drained ou
of me, beloved. And I know now that it is just a
bad for you, because you can't do your work withou
me, and your work ought to come first, darling, eve
if you have to mix your paints with my heart's blood.

Darling, if you think it's better we shouldn't b
real lovers, don't leave me altogether. Let us se
each other sometimes. It doesn't matter even if th
Gorgon is there and we have to talk the silly, mean
ingless tea-party talk. Our real selves will be sayin
the real things to one another all the time, and w
can look at one another and be a little bit happ

can *feel* with my eyes, can't you, darling? When
u met us yesterday and stood there with that absurd
-hat in your hand—it was so funny to see you in
at stiff, formal morning dress, but you looked very
endid and it made me so proud to think you were
lly all mine and no one knew it—well, when I saw
u, I could feel in all my fingers, darling, the queer
ely feel of your hair that first day—do you remem-
r—when you put your head on my knees and broke
wn and said you loved me. Such a dear head,
rling, all rough and crisp, and the strong, splendid
nes under it, full of wonderful thoughts. If I shut
eyes I can feel it—I'm doing it now, darling.
ut yours—now, this minute—and see if you can't
l my hands. Did you, Petra darling—did you
l all the love and life in them? Tell me when you
ite if you can feel me as I feel you!

You will write, darling, won't you? You will spare
: that little ray at least from the great fire of your
: and love. Don't leave me all in the dark, Petra,
d I'll be content with whatever you give me. Every-
ng has been so ghastly that I haven't got it in me
be exacting, dear.

Always your own, only, for ever,
LOLO

The Same to the Same

June 6th, 1929

TRA, MY DARLING, MY DEAR, DEAR MAN DARLING,

Oh, my dearest, isn't it terrible to see the summer
ming, and to feel so wintry and lonely. Your letters

have been a help, but what wouldn't I give for yo
yourself, the real you !

You will tell me again that I'm not telling the truth
That I don't really love you, because I won't give u
being conventional and respectable and go away wit
you, but it isn't that, Petra darling. You think in you
dear, impetuous way that it would all be so easy
but it wouldn't really, darling. You think that becaus
you are a man, and you don't consider how awful i
would be, day after day, all the sordidness and trouble
It wouldn't really be fair to make you go through a
that. Even if He would let me go—which, of course
he wouldn't, because he is so selfish—it would be
long, drawn-out misery. I know how horrid it is be
cause I know a woman who got her divorce. Of course
her husband took all the blame, but it was a miserabl
time for everybody, and she and her man friend ha
to go right away, and he gave up his post, a very goo
post, and they are living in quite a slummy little plac
in rooms, and don't even get enough to eat sometimes

Anyway, the Gorgon would *never* consent to m
divorcing him, because he prides himself on bein
very virtuous and proper, and he would probabl
have to leave his firm or something. He would neve
do that. He thinks more of his firm than of anythin
in the world—far more than he does of me or m
happiness, which he has never considered at all fro
the day he married me.

Doesn't it seem too awful that one has to pay s
heavily for making a mistake ? I keep on thinking,
only I hadn't married him. If only I were free to com
to you, Petra darling—what a wonderful time we coul
have together ! But then I think again that if I hadn
married him, I should never have lived here, never me

u, and oh, darling, what could make up for that? I suppose, as they say in the nature-books, that He s "fulfilled his function" in bringing us together. I oked at him last night as he sat glooming over the utton, which wasn't quite done as he likes it (you uld never let a stupid thing like mutton poison the ole beautiful day for you, but he does), and I thought Mr. Munting saying once, "All God's creatures have eir uses," when Miss Milsom had made me one of r lovely scarves—and I said to myself, "If only you uld know, my dear Gorgon, what is the one thing our lives I thank you for!" That would really have ven him something to gloom about, wouldn't it?

It is so funny—he is always asking when you are ming to see us again. His Cookery Book is going to published in a few weeks' time, and he is ridiculously cited about it. He thinks it is a great work of art, d is going to send you a copy as from one artist to other. Wouldn't that make a good reason for you to ll on us, if you could get over to England? It is clever you to be able to find so many things to say out his silly little water-colours—you who are a really eat painter (I have learnt not to say artist now. o you remember how impatient you were with me nen I called you "artistic"? We nearly had a arrel that day. Fancy us quarrelling about anything now!)

It makes me sad, Petra darling, to think of my poor nely Man so far away, wanting his Lolo. And I'm little frightened, too, when I think of all the beauti- l ladies in Paris. I expect they think a lot of you, n't they? Do you go to a great many fashionable rties? Or do you live the student-life I used to read out and think how gay and jolly it must be? You

don't tell me very much about the people you see a
the places you go to. I wish you weren't a portra
painter—you must have so many opportunities to fi
someone more beautiful than your poor Lolo and
much cleverer. Don't say they aren't more beautif
than I am, because I shall know you aren't telling t
truth. I'm not really beautiful at all—only when I h
been with you I sometimes used to look in the gl
and think that happiness made me *almost* beautif
sometimes. I have been reading in a book about t
real Laura and Petrarch—did you know, she was rea
only a little girl and that he hardly saw her at al
Perhaps she was only beautiful in his imagination, to
But that didn't prevent her from being his inspi
ation, did it? I wonder if you are the same. Perhaps
inspire you better from a distance. I don't think
woman *could* feel like that. She wants her Man alway
close to her. Darling, do say you want me like tha
too.

I must stop now. The Gorgon will be wanting
tea. I am living just like a hermit now. I never go an
where and I try to do all I can to keep him in a goo
temper, for fear he should get the idea that there
Somebody Else in my life. How dreadful it would be
he suspected anything. He is fairly reasonable no
except when his food isn't quite right. But oh! I a
so lonely.

Darling, I love you so much I don't know what
do with myself. I have kissed the paper twenty tim
where your dear, darling name is. You must kiss it, to
and think you are kissing your own, your absolute
ownest own,

Lo

. The Same to the Same

14th June, 1929

ARLING,

Your letter hurt me so dreadfully, I cried and cried. h, Petra, you can't love me at all, or you wouldn't y such awful things. You can't really think that if love you I ought to let *him* divorce *me*. Darling, do ink how horrible it would be! How could I go rough all that terrible shame in public, and all my ends looking on and thinking hateful things about ır beautiful love? At least, I suppose I could go rough with it—one can go through all kinds of gonies and still live—but that you should *want* me to o it—that you could think of your Lolo in such a rdid way—that's what hurts me, darling. You used o say you wanted to stand between me and trouble, nd couldn't bear to think of anything ugly touching ır pure and lovely passion. And yet now you want o smirch me with the stain of the divorce courts and e my name in the papers for people to snigger at. h, Petra, it's absolutely clear you don't really love e one bit.

You couldn't feel the same to me, Petra, I know at, if I came to you all dirtied and draggled from n ordeal like that. Just think of having to stand up the witness-box and tell the judge all about our ve. It would all sound so different to their worldly, arse, horrible minds, and our love would seem just vulgar, nasty—I don't like to write the word they ould call it, even to you—instead of the pure, clean, vine thing it really is.

Darling, I'm not thinking of myself—I'm thinking you and our love. I don't want a single spot to touch

it. It would be better to suffer all our lives as we a suffering now—as *I* am suffering, for sometimes, Petr I don't think you suffer at all—rather than to look each other with the shadow of an ugly scandal betwe us. You don't understand. You don't realise what difference these things make to a woman. It does n make any difference to a man, but even you wou see the stain on me for ever afterwards, and would tu against me.

Tell me you don't really mean it, darling. The must be some other way out. Let us think very ha and find out. Or if you really think so little of me, t me so, and we will say good-bye again—for alway this time. I expect I was wrong to stick to our agre ment before. You wanted to be released then, and y wouldn't have asked it if you hadn't been tired of m already in your heart. Let's end it all, Petra. Perha I shall die, and then you will be free. I feel unhapp enough to die—and if I'm too strong for wretchedne to kill me, there are always easy ways out of it all.

Your heart-broken
Lo

41. The Same to the Same

15, Whittington Terrace
30th June, 19

Darling, dear Petra, my dearest,

Of course I do forgive you. It's you really that mu forgive me for saying such awful things. I didn't mea them. I knew really, deep down in my heart, that yo loved me all the time. Of course I couldn't say goo bye—it would kill me—— Yes, I meant that part of i

But you do see now, don't you, that we can't take
at way out. For my sake, you say, darling, but, in-
ed, I could bear anything for myself—only I don't
nt to spoil the lovely thing we have made. We will
just as you say, wait for a year and see if anything
ppens. It may, if we only want it enough. God might
ke a miracle to help us. Such things have happened
fore now. He might even die—" in him Nature's
py's not eterne "—doesn't somebody say that in a
ay somewhere? We used to go and see Shakespeare
metimes when I was at school, and do the plays in
ss, though I didn't pay much attention to them then.
lidn't understand what a difference art and poetry
ke to one's life. I was waiting for you to come and
ch me, my dear.

I am going to do some really solid reading now, to
and be more worthy of my darling when the happy
ne comes. (I must believe there will be a happy time,
I should go mad.) This year of waiting shall be a
ar of self-development. That will make the desolate
ys pass more quickly. Goodness knows I shall have
ne enough, for He never lets me go out anywhere or
ve any of my own friends to see me. The only people
ver have to talk to are his friends from the office.
ey talk about bridges and electrical plant interminly. I don't know how people can live with such petty,
ll things taking up all their minds. Sometimes one or
o of them have the graciousness to ask me if I have
n the latest play or film, but I never have, and I
t have to sit and smile while He says, " We're quiet,
mestic people, my wife and I ; we don't care about
s night life." And if I ever suggest going out, he
tends that I want to be " gadding round " in night-
bs at all hours. I am ashamed of being so ignorant

of the things everybody is talking about. Other hus bands take their wives out. But no—if I want to sti out of doors, I'm a bad woman—" one of these moder wives who don't care for their homes." What kind o place is my home, that I should care about it?

I have got that book you were talking about, *Wome in Love*. It is very queer and coarse in parts, don't yo think, and rather bewildering, but some of the descrip tions are very beautiful. I don't understand it all, bu it is thrilling, like music. That bit about the horse, fo instance. I can't quite make out what he means, bu it is terribly exciting. What funny people Lawrence' characters are! They don't seem to have any ordinar lives, or have to make money or run households or any thing. That woman who is a schoolmistress—she neve seems to have to bother about her work, one would think it was all holidays at her school. I suppose th author means that the humdrum things don't reall count in one's life at all, and I expect that is true, onl in actual life they do seem to make a lot of difference

Oh, I do hate this cramping life—always telling lie and smothering up one's feelings. But tyrants mak liars. It is what somebody I read about in the paper calls " slave-psychology." I feel myself turning into a cringing slave, lying and crawling to get one little scra of precious freedom—a book, a letter, a thought, ever —and carrying it off into a corner to gloat over it in secret. That is the way in which I am learning to build up an inner life for myself, a lovely, secret freedom, so that the things He says and does can't really hurt me any longer. The real Me is free and happy, worship ping in my hidden temple with my darling Idol, my own dear Petra darling.

How I do love you! My starved life is full when I

ink of you—brimmed with joy and inward laughter. nd one day, perhaps, we shall come out of the dark tacombs and build our temple of Love in the glorious nlight, with the golden gates wide open for all the orld to see and marvel at our happiness.

Yours, beloved, yours utterly and completely,

LOLO

I love to write the name you call me by—the name at is only yours. Such a silly name it would sound people who didn't know what it meant. *He* uses the me other people use—just like an uncle or something. nat's all he is—a sort of Wicked Uncle in a fairy-tale. can bear him better if I think of him just as that.

. *The Same to the Same.*

15, WHITTINGTON TERRACE

18th July, 1929

ARLING, DARLING,

I hardly know how to breathe for joy ! To know that shall see you, hear your dear voice, hold your hand ain ! He heard me singing in the kitchen this morn- g and asked what I was yowling about. I should have ed to tell him. Think of his face if I had said : " My er is coming home and I am singing for joy ! " I id meekly that I was sorry if it disturbed him, and said in his courteous way that it didn't matter to m if I liked to hear the sound of my own voice, but e girl would probably think I was mad. I said I didn't re what the girl thought of me, and he answered :

" That's just the trouble with you. You don't car You're right up in the air." So I am—so I am ! Righ above the clouds, Petra darling, up in the golden sun light, where nothing can touch me. He's quite righ for once, if he did but know it.

Darling, we must be very careful when you com I don't know how I shall manage to keep the happ ness out of my eyes and voice. But he won't notice- he never notices how I'm feeling. Besides, he wi monopolise you with his precious book. It's really ou at last, and he's clucking over it like a hen that's lai an egg. People say to me : " So your husband has wri ten a book, Mrs. Harrison. So clever of him. Fanc a man knowing such a lot about cooking ! What exci ing meals you must have. Aren't you afraid he'll poiso himself sometimes with those queer toadstools an things ? " And I smile and say, " Oh, but my husban would never make a stupid mistake. He knows so muc about them, you see." That's quite true, too. He doesn make mistakes about things—only about people. H never gets anything right about me—not one singl thing. But then he really *cares* about mushrooms an takes trouble to study them.

I wonder how his first wife put up with him. Sh was a homely sort of person, from all accounts—th sort that are good housekeepers and mothers and a that. I think, if I'd ever had a child I could have bee happier, but he has never given me one, and doesn seem to want to. I'm glad of that now—since I m you. It would be terrible to have his child now— would seem like a sort of treason to you, beloved. Don be afraid, dearest. He never touches me—you kno what I mean—and I wouldn't let him. I don't let hi even give me his usual morning peck if I can help i

don't refuse, of course—that would make him sus-
ious at once. I just happen to be busy and keep
t of his way. He's glad, I think, because he always
ed to grumble at any demonstration and say, "That'll
, that'll do "—though he'll let the cat swarm over
n and knead bread on his chest for hours together.
suppose he thinks a woman's feelings don't matter
much as a cat's !

But I don't know why I bother about him at all,
ien you, you, you are the one thing filling my heart.
n, my darling, my Petra, my heart's heart ! You are
ming back. Nothing else is of importance in the whole
rld. The sun's shining and everything is happy. I
nt out to do some shopping to-day—silly, trivial
ngs for the house—and I could have kissed the bread
d the potatoes as I put them into my basket, just for
that you and I and they exist in the same world
ether ! Petra, beloved, you and I, you and I—oh,
rling, isn't it wonderful !

Your happy
LOLO

The Same to the Same

15, WHITTINGTON TERRACE
August 2nd, 1929

TRA, OH, MY DEAR !

Oh, darling, never say now that the luck isn't on
r side sometimes. Something even bigger than luck,
haps. That we should save that last, wonderful eve-
ig out of the wreck—so perfect, so unspeakably
nderful—our evening of marvellous love. Just think
hat it should be your last night, and that he should

be called out suddenly like that, and ask you, himself, not to go before he got back. And even then, if it hadn't been the girl's night out, we shouldn't have been safe. But it was, by such incredible luck, Petra mine.

Do you know, there was a moment when I was frightened. I thought, for a horrible minute, that he had suspected something after all, and had only pretended to go out, and would come slinking back on purpose to catch us. Did that occur to you? And were *you* afraid to say anything, lest *I* should be frightened? I was. And then, quite suddenly, I felt certain, absolutely *certain* that it was all right. We were being watched over, Petra. We had been given that great hour—a little bit of eternity, just for you and me. God must be sorry for us. I can't believe it was sin—no one could commit a sin and be so happy. Sin doesn't exist, the conventional kind of sin, I mean—only lovingness and unlovingness—people like you and me, and people like him. I wonder what Mr. Perry would say to that. He is just crossing the road now to Benediction, as he calls it. He thinks he knows all about what is right and what is wrong, but lots of people think his candles and incense wicked, and call him a papist and idolater and things like that. And yet, out of his little, cold, parish experience, he would set himself up to make silly laws for you, darling, who are big and free and splendid. How absurd it all is! He preached such a funny sermon the other day, about the Law and the Gospel. He said, if we wouldn't do as the Gospel said, and keep good for the love of God, then we should be punished by the Law. And he said that didn't mean that God was vindictive, only that the Laws of Nature had their way, and worked out the punishment quite impartially, just as fire burns you if you touch it, not

punish you, but because that is the natural law of fire. I am wandering on, darling, am I not? I only wondered what kind of natural revenge Mr. Perry thought God would take for what he would call our sin. It does seem so ridiculous, doesn't it? As if God or Nature could trouble about us, with all those millions and millions of worlds to see to. Besides, our love is the natural thing—it's the Gorgon who is unnatural and abnormal. Probably that's *his* punishment. He denies the love, and our love is Nature's revenge on him. But, of course, he wouldn't see it that way.

Oh, darling, what a wonderful time these last weeks have been. I enjoyed every minute. I have been so happy, I didn't know how to keep from shouting my happiness out loud in the streets. I wanted to run and tell all the people who passed by, and the birds and the flowers and the stray cats how happy I was. Even the Gorgon being there couldn't spoil it altogether. Do you remember how angry he was about *The Sacred Flame*? And you were holding my hand, and your hand was telling mine how true and right it was that the useless husband should be got out of the way of the living, splendid wife and her lover and child. Darling, I think that play is the most wonderful and courageous thing that's ever been written. What right have the useless people to get in the way of love and youth? Of course, in the play, it wasn't the husband's fault, because he was injured and couldn't help himself—but that's Nature's law again, isn't it? Get rid of the ugly and sick and weak and worn-out things, and let youth and love and happiness have their chance. It was a brave thing to write that, because it's what we all know in our hearts, and yet we are afraid to say it.

Petra, darling, my lover, my dearest one, how can

we wait and do nothing, while life slips by? The tim
of love is so short—what can we do? Think of a way
Petra. Even—yes, I'm almost coming to that—even i
the way leads through shame and disgrace—I believ
I could face it, if there is no other. I know so certainl
that I was made for you and that you are all my life
as I am yours.

Kiss me, kiss me, Petra. I kiss my own arms an
hands and try to think it's you. Ever, my darling, you
own

LOL

44. The Same to the Same

15, WHITTINGTON TERRACE

5th Oct., 192

Oh, Petra, I am so frightened. Darling, something
dreadful has happened. I'm sure—I'm almost quit
sure. Do you remember when I said Nature couldn'
revenge herself? Oh, but she can and *has*, Petra. Wha
shall I do? I've tried things, but it's no good. Petra
you've *got* to help me. I never thought of this—we were
so careful—but something must have gone wrong
Petra, darling, I can't face it. I shall kill myself. He'l
find out—he must find out, and he'll be so cruel, an
it will all be too terrible.

Petra, I was so desperate I tried to make him—don'
be angry, Petra—I mean, I tried to be nice to hi
and make him love me, but it wasn't any good. I don'
know what he will do to me when he discovers th
truth. Darling, darling, do *something*—anything! I

n't think of any way, but there must be one, some-
w. Everybody will know, and there will be a fright-
fuss and scandal. And even if we got a divorce, it
ouldn't be in time—they are so slow in those dreadful
urts. But I don't expect he would divorce me. He
ould just smother it all up and be cruel to me. I don't
ow. I feel so ill, and I can't sleep. He asked me what
as the matter with me to-day. I'd been crying and
look simply awful. Petra, my dearest, what *can* we
. How cruel God is ! He must be on the conven-
nal people's side after all. Do write quickly and tell
e what to do. And don't, don't be angry with me,
rling, for getting you into this trouble. I couldn't
lp it. Write to me or come to me—I shall go mad
th worry. If you love me at all, Petra, you must help
e now.

LOLO

. *Statement of John Munting*
[Continued.]

The next news I had about the Harrisons was about
e middle of October, 1929, when I got a note from
thom, written, rather unexpectedly, from "The
ack, Manaton, Devon." He said that he was staying
ere with Harrison, who was having his annual
camp" among the water-colour "bits" and the
tural food-stuffs. Harrison, it appeared, had been so
essing that he really had not known how to refuse,
ecially as he was really feeling rather played-out,
er several months' strenuous work in Paris. After
e unbearably hot and prolonged summer, the prospect
pottering about a bit among the lush grass and deep

lanes of Devon had seemed attractive, even whe
coupled with the boredom of Harrison's company. " A
a matter of fact," he added, " the old boy is not s
bad when you get him in the country by himself. Thi
is the kind of life that really suits him. As a famil
man he is a failure, but he quite comes out and blossom
doing the odd bits of work about the shack. And h
certainly is a first-class cook, though up to the presen
I have successfully avoided his nettle-broth and stewe
toadstools, not wishing to be cut off in my youth. Thi
is a pretty place—miles away from everywhere, c
course, stuck down on a circumbendible lane whic
runs down from Manaton (half a dozen houses and
pub) to the deep valley which separates the Manato
Ridge and Becky Falls from Lustleigh Cleave. The onl
neighbours are the sheep and cows—an old ram walke
into the kitchen the other day. Harrison was gruntin
over the stove and didn't see him at first. ' Be-hey-hey,
says the ram ; ' Eh-heh-heh,' bleats Harrison, lookin
up ; and damn it, he was so exactly like the old fello
that he wanted nothing but a pair of horns to complet
the resemblance ! We wash the crockery, and the
Harrison takes his newest superfine painting-box, wit
the collapsible legs and all the rest of it, and trundle
away into the valley, where he sits all day in a gorse
bush, trying to put the tumbling of the stream on paper
The drought has dried it up a good bit, but never wa
anything so desiccated as the arid little plan of it h
produces with pride for me to see, painted with a brus
with three hairs in it—peck, peck, scratch and dab—
like a canary scrabbling for seed. Why don't I take th
opportunity to do some work in this glorious place
No, thanks ; I'm a figure and portrait wallah—besides
I've come here for a rest. It is not mine to sing th

ately grace—I smoke my pipe in the doorway, drive e cattle out of the back garden, and see that the stew- ot doesn't boil too fast.

" So here I am, in comfortable exile with Menelaus, hile Helen sits at home and sews shirts. And it's a etter way, too. One mustn't take these things too riously. Damned if Harrison hasn't got the right idea ter all. Look after the grub and leave women to their vn fool devices. They give a man no peace. You, eing married, have perhaps got your house in order. o you find it as easy to do your work, now that you're ooked up to a whirlwind ? But, of course, your whirl- ind works too, and helps to turn the mill-wheel, which o doubt makes all the difference."

Lathom went on in this strain for a page or so. ynicism from him was something new, and I took it spell restlessness of some sort or other. Either, I ought, he was getting fed up with the lady's exactions, the trio had arrived at a *modus vivendi*. It was no fair of mine.

He ended up by saying that he would be running o to town in a day or two and would look me up. I as then living in Bloomsbury—in fact, in my present ouse—and my wife was away with her people. I had ranged to go with her, but at the last moment an gent matter turned up—an Introduction to an thology, which had to be rushed out in a great hurry fore some other publisher got hold of the idea, and had to stay behind to get the thing fairly going, as meant a good deal of work at the British Museum.

When Lathom turned up at about one o'clock on e 19th, I explained this to him and apologised for aving no lunch to offer him. Like most men, and omen, too, when left to themselves, I found solitary

meals uninspiring. So, apparently, did "the girl," whom, till my wife left me, I had imagined to be a good cook. Not that I had ever expected Elizabeth t leave her writing to see after my meals, so I can onl suppose that her moral influence was enough to mak the difference between roast mutton and raw.

Lathom commiserated me, and we went and ha some grub at the "Bon Bourgeois." He seemed to b in high spirits, when he thought about it, but had a way of going off into fits of abstraction which suggeste nerves or pre-occupation of some kind. He asked abou the anthology and my work generally with apparen interest, and then, to my surprise, broke suddenly int my description of the plot of my new novel by saying

"Look here, if the wife's away, why don't you com down to the Shack with me for the week-end? It'll d you good, freshen you up and all that."

"Good heavens," I said, "it's Harrison's place. H won't want me."

"Oh, yes, he'd love to have you. Oh, rather. In fact he only said to me yesterday, when I was starting off he wished I could bring you back with me. He's quit forgotten all that misunderstanding. He's rather dis tressed about it, really. Thinks he did you an injustice Would like to make it up. He says you must be har bouring resentment, because you've been in town al this time and haven't been to see them."

"That's nonsense," I said. "*You* know why I'v thought it best to keep out of it."

"Yes, but he doesn't. Naturally he thinks you'r offended."

"Didn't you tell him I was busy?"

"Of course. Oh, yes. Played up the popular literar man for all it was worth. So he said, of course you wer

o important nowadays to remember your old ends."

" Damn it," I said, " what a tactless devil you are, athom. You needn't have hurt his feelings."

" No, but look here. Why not come down? It'll ease the old boy no end, and as neither of the women ll be there, there won't be any awkwardness. It's a mned good opportunity for being civil to him without volving your wife."

" Civil is a good word for it," I objected. " I don't ow that it's particularly civil to plant myself on e man like that, and make him feed me and so on, thout notice, when he probably doesn't want me. st at the week-end, too, when it's difficult to get tra supplies."

" Oh, that doesn't matter," said Lathom, " we'll take me grub down with us. I was going to in any case. erything has to be brought out there by a carrier ice a week. Frightful desolate hole. We'll take a t of beef and a couple of pounds of sausages. That'll e us through all right."

I considered it.

" I say," said Lathom, suddenly. " Do come, old an. I wish you would. It's all right there, you know, t I do get a bit bored at times. I'd like to have a p with somebody who talks my language."

" If you're fed up," I said reasonably, " why do you y? "

" Oh, well—I promised I would, don't you see. It's t bad really, but it would do us both good to have a of a change."

" Now, look here, Lathom," said I, " I don't like the a particularly. I'm not particularly puritan " (I n't know why one uses that phrase—I suppose it is

easier to disown one's decencies when one represents them as something grotesque in a black suit and steeple-hat), " but considering the way you behaved to Harrison, I think it's rather thick to go and push your friends on to him. What you do is your own business " (looking back on it, I seem to have extracted a great deal of satisfaction from this original thought), " but it's rather different for me."

" Punk ! " said Lathom. " That's all absolutely over. Finished. Washed out. It's you who keep on digging it up again. Can't you forget it and come down and help me out with old Harrison ? "

" Why so keen ? "

" Oh, I'm not particularly keen. I thought you'd like it, that's all. It doesn't matter. What are you doing this afternoon ? B.M. again ? "

I said, no ; I avoided the Reading Room on Saturday afternoons, because it was so crowded, and asked him about his work.

He talked about it a little, in the same vague way as before, saying how difficult it was to settle to anything, and displaying some irritability with his sitters of the moment. His triumph at the Academy had made him fashionable, and fashionable women were all alike, it seemed ; small-minded and featureless. One might as well paint masks. All of which I had heard so often from other painters that I put Lathom down as already spoilt.

I suggested that he should stay up in town and do a show with me, but he said he was fed up with shows. He had only come up to see his agent, and was catching the 4.30. Why didn't I change my mind and come with him ?

It ended in my changing my mind, and going. I

rdly know why, except that I was only six months arried and my wife was away, which, to the well-lanced mind is no good reason for idle behaviour. The express ran us down in smooth, stuffy comfort, d reached Newton Abbot dead on time at 9.15. I nnot say—though I have tried—that I remember any rticular incident on the way down. I hate talking on ilway journeys, anyway, and Lathom did not seem ry conversational. I read—it was Hughes' *High Wind Jamaica*—an over-rated book, I think, considered as whole, but memorable for that strange and convincing scription of the earthquake. The thick heat and ence, and then the quick, noiseless shift of sea and ore, like the tilting of a saucer. Good, that. And the astly wind afterwards. And the child, not realising at anything out of the way had happened, because body gave the thing its proper terrifying name. That very natural. I do not care for the part about the ates. It is an anti-climax.

I know we dined on the train, but railway meals are dom memorable. Lathom grumbled, and left his rtion half-eaten, and I said something about his quiring a taste for hedgehog-broth and stewed toad-ols—some silly remark which he took as a deadly ult.

At Newton Abbot we changed into the local, and wdled through Teigngrace, Heathfield and Brimley lt, taking over half an hour about it, till we were ned out, twenty minutes late, on the platform at vey Tracey. It was a quarter-past ten and dark, t the smell of the earth came up pleasantly, with a lcome suggestion of rain in the air. I stood on the tform, clutching an attaché case in one hand and the g with the beef and sausages in the other, while

Lathom transacted some occult business with a man outside. Then he came back, saying briefly, " I've got a man to take us," and we stumbled out to where an aged taxi thrummed mournfully in the gloom. Lathom bundled in, and I parked my bags at his feet.

" What the devil's that ? " he said, crossly.

" The grub, fathead," said I, following him in.

" Oh, yes, of course, I'd forgotten," he said. " Come on, let's get going, for God's sake ! "

Being used to Lathom, I ignored his irritability. We jolted off.

The taxi had a churchyard smell about it, and I mentioned the fact. Lathom slammed the window down with an impatient grunt. I remarked, foolishly, that he didn't seem very enthusiastic about the trip. He said :

" Oh, don't talk so much."

It seemed to me that the prospect of seeing Harrison again had rather got on his nerves, and I looked forward to an exasperating week-end.

" *Vous l'avez voulu*, Georges Dandin," I reflected, and lit a cigarette resignedly. The narrow road heaved and sank between the dark hedges, but climbed on the whole, wriggling determinedly up and round to the ridge. A dim light or so and a cluster of black roofs announced civilisation, and Lathom roused himself to say : " Manaton—there's a good view from here by daylight."

" We shan't be long now, then, I suppose," said I.

He did not reply, and I suddenly became aware that I could hear him breathing. Once I had noticed it, I couldn't seem to shut my ears to the sound. It was like hearing your own heartbeats in the night—when they seem to grow louder and louder, till they

l the silence and keep you from going to sleep. The eaths seemed quite to rasp my ear, they were so avy and so close.

" Eh ! " said Lathom, unexpectedly. " What did ou say ? "

What had I said ? It must have been ages ago, for anaton was well behind us now, and the car was sing her broken-winded way steadily down and wn, with deep cart-ruts wringing her aged bones. recollected that I had said I supposed we shouldn't long now.

" Oh, no," said Lathom. " We're nearly there."

We bounced on in silence for ten minutes more ; en creaked to a standstill. I put my head out. Dim lds, trees and the tinkling of a distant stream coming motely up on a puff of south-west wind. No light. o building.

" Is this it ? " I asked, " or has the engine conked ? "

" What ? " said Lathom, irritably. " Yes, of course is is it. What's the matter ? Push along—we don't ant to stay here all night."

I wrestled with the door and edged out, Lathom close my heels. He paid the driver, and the car began to ove off, lurching on down the slope to find a place to rn.

" Here ! " said I ; " have you got the beef ? "

" Oh, hell," said Lathom, " I thought you had it."

I plunged after the taxi, reclaiming the food, and me back to where Lathom was standing. His hurry emed to have left him. He was striking a match d having a little trouble with it. The car, a hundred rds off, choked, crashed its gears, burbled, choked ain, burbled, choked, and came thudding up on ttom gear. It passed us, labouring and bumping,

moved up into second, hesitated into top, and its red rear light vanished, showed, jerking, vanished and span slowly skywards.

"Ready?" said Lathom.

I did not point out that I had been patiently waiting for him to make a move, but grasped the bags and followed.

"We've got a field to cross," he explained, holding a gate open for me.

We staggered along for a little. Then he stopped and I bumped up against him.

"Over there," he said.

I looked, and saw a patch of extra darkness, between the darkness of some tree-stems.

"There's no light," I said. "Is he expecting you? I hope he won't be annoyed with me for coming."

"Oh, he won't be annoyed," said Lathom, shortly. "He's gone to bed, I expect. Early bird. Up with the lark and down with the sun and all that. It doesn't matter. We can forage round for ourselves."

A few more minutes, and we stood at the door of the shack. You know what it's like—indeed, all England knows by now—a low, two-roomed cottage, ugly, built of stone, with a slate roof. Only one story—what in Scotland they call a but and ben. The windows were unshuttered, but not a spark of light showed through them—no candle, not so much as the embers of a fire.

Lathom gave an ejaculation.

"He must have gone to sleep," he muttered. I was fumbling for the handle of the door, but he pushed me aside, and I heard the latch click open. He paused, staring into the dark interior.

"I wonder if he's gone wandering off and got

st somewhere," he said, hesitating on the threshold.
" Why not go in and see ? " I countered.
" I'm going to." He stepped in and the unmis-kable rattle of matches in the box told me that he as getting a light. He was clumsy about it, and ly after several futile scratches and curses did the all flame flare up ; he held it high, and for a moment saw the living-room—a kitchen-table cluttered with ockery, a sink, an empty hearth, and a jumble of inting gear, clumped in a corner. Then the match ckered and burnt his fingers, and he dropped it, t made no effort to strike another.
" Juggins ! " said I, defiantly, for this cheerless wel-me was getting on my nerves. " Here—isn't there a ndle or anything ? "
I hunted through my pockets for a petrol lighter. is gave a steadier light, by which I found and lit a droom candle on a bracket just behind the door. e untidy room leaped into existence again. I set candle down on the table, beside the sordid rem-nts of a meal. A chair lay overturned on the floor. righted it mechanically and looked round. Lathom s still standing just inside the door, with his head cked sideways, as though he were listening.
" Well, I'm damned," said I, " this is very cheerful. Harrison——"
" Listen a minute," he said, " I thought I heard him ring."
I listened, but could hear nothing except a tap ipping into the sink.
" Looks to me as if he'd gone out," I said. " How out starting the fire up ? I'm chilly. Where's the od ? "
" In the basket," said Lathom, vaguely.

I investigated the basket, but it was empty.

"Oh, well," I said, "let's have a drink and get to bed. If Harrison comes in later, you'll have to do the explaining."

"Yes," said Lathom, eagerly. "Good idea. Let's have a drink." He wandered about. "Where the devil's he put the whiskey?" He flung open a cupboard door, and groped about, muttering.

At this point a thought occurred to me.

"Would Harrison go out and leave the door unlocked?" I said. "He's a careful sort of fellow as a rule."

"What?" Lathom's head emerged for a moment from the cupboard. "No—no—I should think he would lock up."

"Then he must be about somewhere," I said. We had been talking almost in whispers—I suppose with the idea of not disturbing the sleeper, but now I lost patience.

"Harrison!" I shouted.

"Shut up!" said Lathom. "He must have left the whiskey in the bedroom." He picked up the candle and plunged into the inner room.

The shadows parted and flowed in after him as he went, leaving me in darkness again. His footsteps shuffled to a halt and there was a long pause. Then he spoke, in a curious, thick voice with a catch in it like a gramophone needle going over a crack.

"I say, Munting. Come here a minute. Something's up."

The inner room was in a sordid confusion. My hurrying footsteps tripped over some bedclothes. There were two beds in the room, and Lathom was standing by the farther of the two. He stepped aside

ıd his hand shook so that the candle-flame danced. thought at first that the man on the bed had moved, ıt it was only the dancing candle.

The bed was broken and tilted grotesquely side-ays. Harrison was sprawled over it in a huddle of iled blankets. His face was twisted and white and s eyeballs rolled up so that only the whites showed. stooped over him and felt for his wrist. It was cold ıd heavy, and when I released it it fell back on the ed like dead-weight. I did not like the look of the ostrils—black caverns, scooped in wax—not flesh, ıyway—and the mouth, twisted unpleasantly up-ards from the teeth, with the pale tongue sticking rough.

"My God!" I cried, but softly—and turned to look Lathom, "the man's dead!"

"Dead?" He was looking at me, not at Harrison. Are you sure?"

"Sure?" I put a finger beneath the fallen jaw, hich woodenly resisted me. "Why, he must have en dead for hours. He's stiff, man, stiff!"

"So he is, poor old b——" said Lathom.

He began to laugh.

"Stop that," I said, snatching the candle away om him, and dumping him roughly down on to e other bed. "Pull yourself together. You want drink."

I found the whiskey with some trouble. It was on e floor, under Harrison's bed. He must have grasped it in his struggles and let it roll away from him. ortunately, the cork was in place. There was a mbler, too, but I did not touch that. I fetched ıother from the living-room (Lathom cried out not be left in the dark, but I paid no attention), and

poured him out a stiff peg, and made him swallo it neat. Then I stood over him as he sat and shuddered

"Sorry, old man," he said at last. "Silly of me t make an ass of myself. Bit of a startler, isn't it? Bu your face—oh, Lord!—if you could have seen yourself It was priceless."

He began to giggle again.

"Don't be a fool," said I. "We've got no tim for hysterics. Something's got to be done."

"Yes, of course," he said. "Yes—something mus be done. A doctor or something. All right, old mar Give me another drink and I'll be as right as rain.

I gave him another small one, and took some mysel That seemed to clear my mind a little.

"How far are we from Manaton?"

"About three miles, I think—or a little over."

"Well," I said, "I suppose somebody there wi have a telephone, or can send a messenger. One o us had better get along there as fast as possible an get on to the police."

"Police?"

"Yes, of course, you ass. They've got to know.

"But you don't suppose there's anything wron about it?"

"Wrong? Well, there's a dead man—that's prett wrong, I should think. He must have died of something Did he have a heart, or fits, or anything?"

"Not that I know of."

I surveyed the distasteful bed again.

"It looks more as though—he'd eaten some thing——"

I stopped, struck by an idea.

"Let's look at the things in the other room," said. Lathom jumped to his feet.

' When I left him he said something about fungi—
was going to get some special kind——"
We went out. In a saucepan on the table was a
ck, pulpy mess. I sniffed it cautiously. It had a
rish, faintly fungoid odour, like a cellar.
' Oh, Lord," whimpered Lathom, " I knew it would
ppen some day. I told him over and over again.
laughed at me. Said he couldn't possibly make a
stake."
' Well, I don't know," I said, " but it looks rather
if he had. Poor devil. Of course, it would happen
very day there was nobody here to help him. I
ppose he was absolutely on his own. Didn't any
desmen call, or anything ? "
' The carrier comes over on Mondays and Thursdays
h supplies," said Lathom, " and takes the orders
the next visit."
' No milkman ? No baker ? "
' No. Condensed milk, and the carrier brings the
ad. If there's nobody in he just puts the things on
window-sill."
' I see." It seemed to me pretty ghastly. " Well,"
ent on, " will you go or shall I ? "
' We'd better both go, hadn't we ? "
' Nonsense." I was positive about this. I don't know
y, except that it seemed damnable, somehow, to
ve Harrison's body alone, when leaving it could do
possible harm. " If you don't feel fit to go, I will."
' Yes—no ! " He looked about him uneasily. " All
ıt, you go. It's straight up the hill, you can't miss it."
took up my hat, and was going, when he called
back.
I say—do you mind—I think I'd rather go after all.
el rather rotten. I'll be better in the fresh air."

"Now look here," I said firmly. "We can't stay shilly-shallying all night. If you don't like staying in the house, you'd better go yourself. But make up your mind, because the quicker we get on to somebody the better. Get the police and they'll probably be able to find a doctor. And you'll have to give them Mrs Harrison's address."

"I hadn't thought of that. Yes—I suppose—I suppose—they'd better break it to her."

Somebody's got to. It's a beastly business, but you don't know any relations you could get hold of, do you?"

"No. Very well. I'll see to it. Sure you won't come with me? You don't mind staying?"

"The sooner you go, the shorter time I'll have to stay," I reminded him.

"Right-oh!" He paused, appeared about to say something, then repeated "right-oh!" and went out, shutting the door behind him.

Three miles uphill in the dark—it would take him close on the hour, certainly. Then he had to knock somebody up, find a telephone, if there was one, get on to the police—say half an hour for that. Then it all depended whether there was an available car in the village—whether he came straight back, or waited for the officials, who would come, presumably from Bovey Tracey. I need not, I thought, expect anything to happen under an hour and three-quarters or so. I suddenly remembered that I was cold, and started to hunt for kindling. I found some, after a little search, in an outhouse. The fire consented to light without much persuasion, and after that, and when I had found and lighted two extra candles, I began to feel in better condition to take stock of things.

A bottle of Bovril on the mantelpiece presented elf to me with helpful suggestiveness. I took up the ttle to fill it at the tap. A glance at the sink nearly rned me from my intention, but I conquered the dden nausea and drew my water with care. Impulse ould have flooded the repulsive evidences of sickness vay, but as the phrase flashed through my mind the ord "evidence" asserted itself. "I must preserve e evidence," I said to myself, and found myself bconsciously taking note that this trifling episode went prove—as I had always believed—that Anatole rance was right in supposing that we always, or at y rate usually, think in actual words.

The Bovril and the psychology together restored y self-confidence. I began to reconstruct Harrison's anner of death in my mind. He was quite stiff. I ed to remember what I had read about *rigor mortis*. ne thinks one knows these things till it comes to the int. My impression was that rigidity usually set in out six or seven hours after death, and that it began the neck and jaw and extended to the limbs and nk, going away in the same order, after an interval ich I could not remember. I braced myself up to go ck to Harrison and feel him again. The jaw was rigid, e limbs still fairly flexible. It seemed to me, then, that must have died some time that morning. I could not ite recollect by what train Lathom had said he had me to town, but, presumably, whenever it was, he had t Harrison fit and well. It was now getting on for dnight on Saturday. Say Harrison had been dead hours—what then? I had no idea how long fungus-isoning—if it was fungus-poisoning—took to act. esumably, it would depend on the amount taken and e state of the victim's heart.

What meal was it whose remains lay on the table I looked into the cupboard. In it there was a larg cottage-loaf, uncut. On the table was another, fro which a couple of slices or so seemed to have bee taken. Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday. If tw loaves represented four days' allowance before th carrier called again, the suggestion was that the la meal had been taken some time on the Thursda Say Harrison had finished up the old loaf on Thursda morning, the remains probably represented Thursday mid-day or evening meal. The cupboard also containe about a pound of shin of beef, still in the paper in whic the butcher had wrapped it, and smelling and lookin rather on the stale side, a dried haddock, and a larg quantity of tinned food. The meat was not " off," bu the blood had dried and darkened. It looked as thoug the carrier had left it on his Thursday's visit. Evidentl therefore, Harrison had been alive then to take it i But since he had not cooked it, I concluded that h must have been taken ill some time on the Thursda night or Friday morning.

Pleased with these deductions, I reasoned a litt further. How soon after the meal had the troub started? He had not cleared the table. Was he th kind of tidy man who clears as he goes? Yes, I thoug he was. Then the illness had come on fairly soon aft the meal. The chair which had stood before the use plate was now lying on its side, as though he ha sprung up in a hurry and knocked it over. Searchin about on the floor, I came upon a pipe, filled, an scarcely smoked. There was a cup, half-filled wit coffee. I began to see Harrison, his supper finished, h chair pushed back against the edge of the rug, his pip lit up, lingering over his after-dinner coffee. Sudden

is gripped with a spasm of pain or nausea. He jumps
, dropping his pipe. The chair catches the edge of
e carpet and falls over as he makes a dash for the
k. He clings to the edge of it and is horribly sick.
hat next?

I took up the candle and went out into the little
rd at the back of the house, where there was the usual
imitive country convenience. It occurred to me, as I
rsued my sordid investigations, that the lot of
roners' officers, policemen, doctors and detectives
is much more disagreeable than sensational fiction
uld lead one to suppose. I soon had enough of the
rd and came in again.

After that—the bedroom, I supposed. And whiskey,
course. Pain and exhaustion would call for spirits.
ell, I knew where I had found the whiskey and the
mbler. Then more sickness—by that time he had
en too bad to move. Then—I did not like the look
the broken bedstead. How did one die of fungus-
isoning? Not peacefully, I supposed. There was no
ace in that twisted body and face. How long had the
ony of delirium and convulsion lasted? It must be
damnable thing to die in so much pain, absolutely
ne.

I did not like these ideas. I took a sheet from the
er bed, and laid it gently over Harrison's body,
ng careful to disturb nothing. Then I went back
d sat by the fire.

At about half-past two, I heard voices outside, and
ened the door to Lathom, a police-sergeant, and a
n who was introduced as Dr. Hughes of Bovey
acey. He was a brisk and confident middle-aged man,
d brought an atmosphere of reassurance along with
n.

"Oh dear, yes," he said, "I'm afraid he's quite dead. Been dead for seven or eight hours, if not more. How very unfortunate!" He drew a pair of forceps from his pocket and rolled up the dead eyelids delicately. "Mmm! The pupils are slightly contracted —looks as if your diagnosis might be correct, Mr Lathom. Poisoning of some kind seems indicated. No tablets? Glasses? Anything of that sort?"

I produced the tumbler from under the bedclothes and explained about the whiskey-bottle.

"Oh, yes. Here, Sergeant—you'd better take charge of these."

"The whiskey is all right," I volunteered. "At least we both had some about three or four hours ago, without any ill effects."

"That was rash of you," said Dr. Hughes, with a sort of grim smile. "We'll have to impound it, all the same."

"The mushrooms are in here, doctor," said Lathom anxiously.

"Just a moment. I'll finish here first." He felt and flexed the body and looked it over carefully. "Was this bed like this when you left him? No. Broken in a convulsion, probably. Yes. All right, Sergeant, you can carry on here. I shall want the body and these bedclothes taken down to the mortuary, just as they are. And any other utensils——"

Lathom pulled my arm. "Let's clear out of this," he urged. I stood my ground. Something—either inquisitiveness or the novelist's greed for copy—impelled me to hang about and get in the way.

The doctor finished his investigations and covered the body up again.

"Now then," he said, "that's about all I can do for

e moment. Where's this saucepan you were telling
e about? Oh, yes. Fungus of some sort, obviously,
ıt I can't say what by looking at it. That will all have
go to London, Sergeant. When the Superintendent
›mes he'll see the things packed up. I'll give you the
ldress they're to go to. Sir James Lubbock, the Home
ffice Analyst—here you are, and you'll see they tele-
ıone him to expect them, won't you?"
"Yes, sir."
"What will you do, Sergeant? Hold the fort here
l they send down to relieve you?"
"Yes, sir. The Superintendent will be here very soon
, I expect. They've called him up."
"Very well. Now I'd better be off. I'm wanted for
baby case. You'll find me out at Forbes's place if
›u want me. Lucky I hadn't started. I don't for a
oment suppose anything will happen for hours, but
s her first, and they're naturally fidgety. If I don't
t there pronto, it'll be B.B.A., out of pure cussedness,
ıd I shall never hear the last of it. Well, good night.
•rry I can't give anybody a lift, but I'm going out in
e opposite direction."
He hastened out, and we heard his car chug away
•wn the lane. The sergeant observed that it was a
.d business all round, and suggested that he should
ke down notes of what Lathom and I could tell him.
ound some logs in an outhouse and piled them on the
e till it roared up the chimney. More and more I
gan to feel that this was a scene from a book; it
as like nothing in life at all. It was—hang it—it was
nost cosy. I should have ended, I think, by almost
joying it—the policeman's voice cooing like the note
a fat wood-pigeon, the ruddy blaze on his round
e, the thick thumb that turned the pages of his

notebook, the pink tongue licking the stubby pencil, an Lathom, talking, answering, explaining so lucidly (h had got over his nervousness and was childishly eage to tell his story)—I could have enjoyed it, if it had no been for a fear in the back of my mind.

The sun . . .

You do not want a description of that stiff, col sunrise. I was facing the window, and saw it—first whiteness, then a hardening of the sky-line—then bluish reflection on the ceiling—then an uncertai gleam under the blanket of cloud. The weather wa going to change.

I got up and wandered out across the fields. Th stream, far off, was the only voice in the silence, an that was impersonal. It had no blood nor life behin its chatter.

I wandered to the edge of the slope, where the valle plunged down, gorse and heath and bracken a jumbled among the grey boulders, and looked acro to where the huge tors humped their granite shoulde over the heights of Lustleigh Cleave. They looked grir enough.

What I was wondering was just this : Had Harriso ever guessed about his wife and Lathom ? What ha Lathom said to him in those long, solitary days ? Ha Harrison decided that his best way was to clear ou from the place where he was not wanted ? I knew tha for all his irritating mannerisms, the man had a sterlin unselfishness in him—and it would have been so eas for him—with his knowledge—to make a mistake o purpose when he was gathering fungi.

Would anyone choose a death so painful ? Well— man only the other day had committed suicide by pou ing petrol over his clothes and setting himself on fir

d nothing could be made to appear more natural
n this poison-death of Harrison's. Why had Lathom
en so anxious for me to come down with him? Had
had doubts about his reception? Had he expected
nething? Had Harrison—possibly—agreed, pro-
sed, even hinted that Lathom might return to find
way clear? Or had Lathom spoken some shatter-
word—shown irrefutable evidence—and left the
ts to do their bitter work?

A cock crew in the valley. A sheep said "Baa!"
t behind me, so that I started and laughed. This
d of thing was morbid, and Harrison was the very
t man to lay violent hands on himself. *He* clear
ekly out to make way for a rival? Not likely!

hurried back to the shack. The sergeant was doz-
, his belt off and his tunic unbuttoned. Lathom was
ring into the fire with his chin on his hands.

'Hullo, you two!" I said with unnecessary hearti-
s. The policeman jerked awake. "Lor' bless me,"
muttered apologetically. "I must 'a dropped off."

'Why not?" said I. "Best way to pass the time.
ok here, there's a pound of sausages in our kit that
brought down last night. How about a bit of grub?"

We did not care about using any of the pots and pans
that place, so we whittled a stick to a point, and
sted the sausages on that. They tasted none the
rse.

SECTION TWO

ANALYSIS

Margaret Harrison to Harwood Lathom

15, Whittington Terrace, Bayswater

20.10.29

I, Petra, my dear, my own dear at last!

When I heard your voice on the 'phone this morn-
g, telling me what had happened, I didn't know how
believe it. It all seemed so strange. And when I hung
e receiver up, I had to pinch myself to be sure it
sn't a dream. I went upstairs, and there was the
l in her dressing-gown on the landing. She must
ve been hanging over the stairs, for she said, "Oh,
a'am. Whatever's happened? I heard the telephone
inging and looked out and heard you talking. Has
ere been a accident, ma'am?" I said, "Yes; a
eadful accident. Mr. Harrison's dead." She stared
me, and I said, "He's poisoned himself with eating
ne of those nasty toadstools." She began to cry, "I
ew he would! Oh, ma'am, what an awful thing.
ch a nice gentleman as he was." That seemed to
ake it real, somehow. "A nice gentleman"—well,
e wasn't married to him. She couldn't know how
was feeling. That was just as well, wasn't it, Petra?
e hung about and brought me some tea, sniffing and
bbing over it. I couldn't say anything, but that was
right. She thought I was stunned with grief, I sup-
se. I did feel stunned. I can't realise, even now—
ough I've just seen it in the paper. Fancy that!
ople keep on calling, but I've said I can't see them.
want to be alone with my freedom.

Oh, Petra—didn't I tell you that God was on our

side? Our love is so beautiful, so *right*—He had
make a miracle happen to save it. Isn't it wonderful
without our doing anything at all! That shows h
right it was. I am so glad, now, that we didn't do an
thing of the terrible things we thought about. It wou
have been so dangerous—and we might—I don't kn
—we might have wondered afterwards. It would ha
been like living over a volcano. And now, Heaven h
stepped in and made everything all right for ever a
ever.

How glad I am you weren't there when it happene
That seems like a special providence, too, doesn't i
Because you would have had to go for a doctor, a
then he might have recovered. And besides—peop
might have thought you had something to do with
—if they ever found out about you and me, I mea
Doesn't it seem like a judgment on him, Petra? A
I used to be so angry about his cooking and his toa
stool book and everything—and all the while he w
digging a pit for himself to fall into, like the wick
man in the Bible! It was all planned out from t
beginning, to set us free for our beautiful life togeth
What was that thing people used to say—somethi
in Latin about when God wishes to destroy anybo
He first makes him mad. He *was* mad about the toa
stools and things, you know. Sometimes, when he h
those dreadful fits of temper, I used to think he w
really and truly mad. I was afraid of him then, b
I see now there was nothing to be afraid of. It was
meant to help us in the end.

And Petra—that other thing I was afraid of—y
know—it's all right! Nothing is going to happen!
was just a mistake. Isn't that splendid? Because n
we shan't have to get married in such a hurry. Th

ht have made people talk, you know. We only have ait a little bit now—just a little patience, my sweet- t, and then—oh, Petra ! Think of the happiness ! rything has come right at once, hasn't it, my darl- ? All the clouds cleared away and the sun shining. ell, now, darling—you won't mind if I talk just tle bit of business ? It seems horrid to think of it, n our love ought to be the one thing in our minds, we must be a little bit practical. Of course, I had end for the lawyer this morning and he showed me will. There will be about £15,000 when it is all red up. Half of this goes to his son, Paul, straight y, and I get the other half for my lifetime, after ch it would all go to my children—his and mine— t is, if there were any, and, failing them, it goes to l when I die. So you see, I shall only be bringing a small income, dear, but you are making money , so we shan't be so badly off, shall we ? It's funny suppose if you and I had really had a child, the would have presumed it was *his* (think of that!), then it would have inherited the money ! But I k perhaps it is better as it is. It might not have ned quite honourable to profit by anything that n't quite true, and I should like to feel that every- ng about our love was absolutely clear and honour- e, and that we had nothing to reproach ourselves ut. Of course, narrow-minded people might think love itself was wicked—but one can't help loving, one, darling ? One might as well tell the sun not ise. Because you and I belong to one another, and hing in all the world can alter that. So you won't d about the money, will you, Petra ? I was afraid might have made some mean condition about my not rrying again, but I suppose he didn't think of that.

You will have to stay for the inquest, of course. Sha
I have to go ? I don't like the idea of standing up wi
everybody looking at me. Besides, I can't tell them an
thing, can I ? Do you think he ought to be buried dow
there or brought back to London ? I want to do wha
ever you think would look right. I have cabled to Pau
but he is so far away in the wilds, I don't know wheth
I shall get an answer in time. All these things are
absurd and hateful. We surround death with such
lot of hypocrisy and formality. It ought to be mad
just simple and beautiful, like the leaves falling. I sha
have to order mourning and a widow's veil—think
wearing black clothes when one is so happy. I shou
like a robe made of the rainbow—I'm wearing it
my heart, darling—all for you !

Write quickly, dearest, and tell me what to do. An
tell me that you are as glad as I am and that you lo
me, love me, love me as I love you !

Lo

47. Extract from the "Morning Express" of Tuesda
October 21st, 1929

MUSHROOM DEATH MYSTERY INQUEST

Poisoned Man's Lone Agony

WELL-KNOWN ARTIST GIVES EVIDENCE

The little schoolroom in the remote village of Man
ton in Devon was crowded to-day, when Dr. Pringl
the coroner for the district, opened the inquest on th

ly of George Harrison, aged 56, Head of the Ac-
ınts Department of Messrs. Frobisher, Wiley & Ted-
gton, Electrical Engineers, who was found dead
der extraordinary circumstances in his little cottage,
The Shack," on Saturday night.
Evidence of the deceased's curious hobbies was given
his friend, Mr. Harwood Lathom, the brilliant
ıng artist, who had been staying with him in " The
ack," and who discovered the body.
The deceased, who is the author of *Neglected Edible*
easures, an interesting and highly original volume,
ıling with the foodstuffs to be obtained from our
ive woods and hedgerows, was stated to have been
d of experiments in unconventional cookery, and it
s suggested that he had fallen a victim to accidental
soning, by consuming a dish of venomous toadstools,
ortion of which, it is alleged, was discovered on the
le in " The Shack " at the time of his death.
The inquest was adjourned for a fortnight, to enable
hemical analysis to be made of certain organs.

After formal evidence of identification, the first wit-
s called was Mr. Harwood Lathom. Dressed in a
: of heather-mixture plus-four tweeds and with an
ression of anxiety and distress on his face, Mr.
thom gave his evidence in a subdued tone.

SWEALED HEDGEHOG

Mr. Lathom said that he had known Mr. Harrison
l his family for a period of rather over twelve months.
had occupied the adjoining maisonnette to theirs in
swater, and had there formed an acquaintance with

them, which had resulted in a considerable degree
intimacy. He had painted a portrait of Mrs. Harris
which had been exhibited in the spring of 1929 at
Royal Academy. Financial and other considerati
had resulted in his giving up the lease of the mais
nette in February, and going to live in Paris, but
friendship with the Harrisons had been kept up
correspondence and occasional visits.

Mr. Harrison had been accustomed to take
annual holiday " on his own " at " The Shack," liv
a bachelor existence, and making the experiments
natural cookery in which he was interested. He a
painted in water-colours. On Mr. Lathom's return
England, in October, Mr. Harrison had suggested t
he should join him in his residence at " The Shac
They had gone down there together on Saturday,
11th of October, and had passed a very enjoya
holiday.

The Coroner: Will you explain the arrangeme
made about obtaining supplies of food and so on
Bread, meat and vegetables were brought, wh
required, by the carrier, who called on Monday a
Thursday, and took the orders for his next visit.
supply of tinned food, including condensed m
was kept in " The Shack." There was no deliv
of newspapers. Letters were fetched from the po
office at Manaton by anybody who happened to
walking that way, or brought by the carrier on
visits.

Who did the cooking and housework?—We sha
the work of washing up, carrying wood and so on. M
Harrison did all the cooking. He was a first-class co

Did he supplement the fresh and tinned meat a

on, with what may be called experiments in natural
t ?—Oh, yes. One evening we had swealed hedge-
g, for example. (Laughter.)
Was it good ?—It was delicious. (Laughter.)

"I NEVER ATE ANY TOADSTOOLS"

The Coroner : Hedgehog—was that the only uncon-
itional dish you saw prepared ?—No. On two
three occasions Mr. Harrison gathered fungi of
ious kinds and had them for breakfast or supper.
Did these fungi include the ordinary mushroom of
nmerce ?—On one occasion, yes.
Did you eat any of that dish ?—I ate a small quantity.
Io not care very much for mushrooms.
And on the other occasions ?—On, I think, two
casions, Mr. Harrison brought in other fungi, which,
explained, were good to eat. A great number of
ngi are to be found in the valleys and damp, low-
ng spots in the neighbourhood. One variety was
led, I believe, Chantarelles, or some such name,
d there was also a purple one, called "Amethyst"
nething-or-other.
These were fungi of a kind not usually eaten by the
dinary person ? The sort commonly called toad-
ols.—Yes ; common, wild fungi.
Was the flavour of them agreeable ?—I do not
ow. They smelt very savoury, but I did not eat
y of them.
How was that ?—I did not think it was safe. I was
aid of eating something poisonous.
You knew that a great many edible varieties of
ngi exist in addition to the common mushroom ?

There is a Government publication dealing with ther I believe ?—I believe there is.

And Mr. Harrison was considered an authority c the subject ?—I do not know if he was generally s considered. He had devoted much attention to th subject and had written a book on our natural foo resources.

Had you read the book ?—I had read parts of it.

But you did not feel sufficient confidence in th deceased's judgment to partake of the toadstoo yourself ?—I suppose I did not. These things ar largely a matter of prejudice. I did not care abou the idea of eating toadstools.

UNHEEDED WARNINGS

The Coroner : But Mr. Harrison ate them and wa none the worse.—Oh, certainly. He appeared to enjo them very much and there were no ill-effects.

Did you ever remonstrate with the deceased abou his habit of eating these dangerous fungi ?—I told hir I was afraid there would be an accident some day The subject had frequently been mentioned previously when he was preparing his book. Mrs. Harrison an his friends often said, more or less jokingly, that ther would be a coroner's inquest on him one of these days

And how did the deceased receive these warnings —He laughed, and said it was all ignorance an prejudice. He said there was no danger at all fo anybody who had thoroughly studied the subject.

Can you tell us how these dishes of fungi were pre pared ?—He had several methods. Sometimes h would grill them with butter and garlic, and othe

ıes he would stew them with condensed milk or in ef stock. He was fond of inventing new methods cooking things.

"I AM GOING TO HUNT FOR FUNGI"

The Coroner: Now let us come to the time of the ath. You had gone up to London, I think?—Yes. ıad occasion to consult my agents and to transact few matters of business in town. I went up by the 3 from Bovey Tracey on the Thursday morning. ıad ordered a taxi the day before.

Was Mr. Harrison quite well when you left him? Perfectly. He was in particularly good spirits. He d risen early, with the intention of gathering a tain kind of fungus for his supper. It was one rticular sort which he said he knew where to get. Do you recollect its name?—I am not sure. I think called it "Warty Hat." (Laughter.) He said he ew of a wood where it was very plentiful.

I have here a copy of Mr. Harrison's book. I see ere is a fungus mentioned as being of an edible nature, led "Warty Caps." Would that be the one? Its tin name is *Amanita rubescens*.—I should think that uld be the one.

Had Mr. Harrison started out before you left?—. He saw me off at the gate into the lane.

POISONED DEATH AGONY

Mr. Lathom then stated that he had returned to The Shack" late on Saturday night, bringing with n Mr. John Munting, a mutual friend of himself

and the Harrisons, and the author of a successf novel.

Arriving at " The Shack " at about eleven o'cloc they found the place in darkness and the fire out. Tl remains of a dish of mushrooms was on the table in tl outer room, together with the shells of some boiled egg a loaf of bread and a cup one-quarter filled with coffe

On penetrating into the inner room, they discover the body of Harrison, lying half-dressed on the be It was cold when found, and the features much di torted. Various articles in the room were flung abo in a disorderly fashion, and the trestle-bedstead w broken. Both in this and in the outer room the were signs that the dead man had vomited persistentl A bottle of whiskey and a tumbler were found benea the bed.

As there is no telephone communication betwe " The Shack " and Manaton, Mr. Lathom was oblige to go on foot to summon assistance. The landlo of the inn at Manaton telephoned to the police-statio at Bovey Tracey. Sergeant Warbeck, who receive the message, communicated at once with Dr. Hughe and proceeded in the doctor's car to the scene of th tragedy.

The Coroner : Was Mr. Harrison a man of cheerfi disposition ?—He was a reserved man of quiet tast and behaviour on the whole, though subject t occasional fits of annoyance about trifles.

During the time you were with him at " The Shack, did he appear to have anything on his mind ?- Certainly not ; he was in excellent spirits.

In your opinion, he was not a man likely to la

ent hands on himself?—Far from it. I was con-
ed at the time, and still am, that his death was
ire accident, due to some fungi he had eaten.
came as a great surprise to you?—Well, of course,
as very much shocked and upset, but when I
e to think it over—no, I cannot say I was greatly
rised.
r. Hughes gave evidence that he had examined
body of Harrison and formed the opinion that
n seen by him at about 1.30 a.m. deceased had
n dead seven or eight hours. He had had the body
oved to Bovey Tracey for the purpose of an autopsy.
ing in collaboration with the police, he had sent
ain organs, portions of bed-linen, and remains
ood to be chemically analysed.

The Coroner: At this point of the inquiry, can you
n any conclusion as to the cause of the death?—
: appearances suggest that deceased was poisoned
some substance which produced violent sickness
diarrhœa, followed by prolonged delirium and
vulsions, ending in coma and death. The pupils
he eyes were slightly contracted, suggesting also
action of a poison.
Would fungus-poisoning have this effect?—Yes, and
would certain other vegetable poisons; opium, for
mple. It is, however, unnusual for the appearance
persist so long after death. I do not place much
ance upon this symptom.
Do the general symptoms, as noted by you, appear
point to poisoning by a deadly fungus?—They are
sistent with that possibility.
Dr. Hughes added that there were no exterior signs
he application of physical violence.

WIDOW SHEDS TEARS

Mr. John Munting confirmed Mr. Lathom's evidenc in every particular.

A rustle of sympathy went round the little cou when the widow, Mrs. Margaret Harrison, appeare in the box. Fashionably but quietly dressed in black face-cloth costume and closely-fitting cloche ha Mrs. Harrison gave her evidence in a voice so subdue as to be scarcely audible.

She declared that her husband had greatly looke forward to this country holiday. On such occasion he was accustomed to go to " The Shack " by himsel or with a male friend. She never accompanied hir to " The Shack." On previous holidays he had fre quently taken as his companion his son by an earlie marriage, Mr. Paul Harrison, a civil engineer, nov absent in Central Africa. She had always under stood that the deceased cooked for himself at " Th Shack," and made experiments with unconventiona foodstuffs.

She had warned him again and again of the danger attending such experiments, but deceased had grea confidence in his ability to distinguish edible varieties of plants from the poisonous kinds, and always laughed at any remonstrance.

On being asked whether the deceased was a man who might be considered likely to take his own life, the widow replied indignantly :

" He had no reason to do such a dreadful thing, and I am sure he was the last person to think of it."

The witness here broke down and sobbed violently, and had to be assisted to her seat.

The coroner then adjourned the inquest for a fortight to permit of an analysis of the contents of the iscera and the various articles found in the house.

8. Extract from the "Morning Express" of Wednesday, November 5th, 1929

SIR JAMES LUBBOCK ON SHACK POISON DRAMA

"Accidental Death" Verdict

Coroner's warning words to parents

Startling evidence was given to-day at the resumed nquest at Manaton on the body of George Harrison, 6 years old, of 15 Whittington Terrace, Bayswater, vho was found dead under mysterious circumstances n the lonely cottage known as "The Shack," on aturday, October 19th.

At the previous sitting of the coroner's jury, evidence vas given by the well-known artist, Mr. Harwood athom, of his finding of the body on returning with Mr. John Munting, author of *I to Hercules*, from a brief isit to London. Mr. I athom, who had been spending is holiday alone in "The Shack" with Mr. Harrison, escribed the curious bachelor life led by the deceased Mc

at "The Shack," and his habit of cooking and eating unconventional dishes of hedgehogs, mushrooms and other natural objects.

HOME OFFICE EXPERT AND "DEADLY FUNGUS"

Sir James Lubbock, the Home Office Analyst, was the first witness to be called at the resumed inquest. He stated that he had made an analysis of the contents of the stomach and other organs of the deceased, together with vomited matter obtained from the bedclothes and elsewhere. He had also analysed the remains of a dish of mushrooms and other articles of diet found on the table.

"From the stomach, the vomited matter, and from the unconsumed portion of the dish of fungus," said Sir James, "I obtained by analysis a considerable quantity of a substance known as *muscarine*, which is the poisonous principle of a fungus, *Amanita muscaria*, or the Fly Agaric."

Sir James added that, estimating the amount of the poison which had been rejected from the body in the course of the sickness, he came to the conclusion that deceased must have consumed a very large quantity of the poison.

Sufficient to cause death?—Certainly. Muscarine is an exceedingly deadly poison.

What would be the symptoms of poisoning by muscarine?—They vary in different cases. Generally speaking, a sensation of acute sickness would be experienced almost immediately after the meal, followed by violent vomiting and diarrhœa. There might also

e a feeling of suffocation and dizziness, sometimes ccompanied by blindness. The victim would suffer cute distress and intense depression and fear of death. Jnconsciousness might supervene, or there might be iolent convulsions and prolonged delirium. Death vould probably ensue as a result of respiratory paralysis.

Will you explain that more simply to the jury?—The poison would paralyse the muscles of the throat nd chest, and the victim would be unable to breathe nd would die of suffocation.

You have seen that Dr. Hughes mentioned in his vidence that the pupils of the eyes were slightly con-racted when he first saw the body. What conclusion lo you draw from that?—I cannot definitely say. Myosis (that is, contraction of the pupils) is charac-eristic of the effects of certain poisons, including mus-arine, but the contraction usually disappears at death, hough, curiously enough, in the case of eserine, a ronounced myosis has been found five hours after leath. I should regard a slight degree of contraction s consistent with muscarine poisoning, but not, in tself, conclusive evidence one way or another.

Have you ever seen a case of muscarine poisoning?—I have seen perhaps half a dozen cases in my own xperience, mostly among children who had eaten he Fly Agaric in mistake for an edible mushroom. One case, I remember, was brought to the hospital oo late for anything to be done, and the patient ex-ired in convulsions after a period of unconsciousness. Three or four were treated by the injection of atropin nd recovered completely. Another case was not rought to my notice till after the symptoms had leared up of their own accord; in this case the amount aten was very small.

Such cases are not always fatal?—By no means. If the proper treatment can be given immediately, the prognosis is favourable. Without such treatment, however, and where a large quantity of the poison is consumed, recovery would be less likely.

The Coroner: In your opinion, what was the cause of death in the case of Mr. Harrison?

Sir James Lubbock: I have not the slightest doubt that he died of poisoning by muscarine, taken in the dish of fungus submitted to me for analysis.

Sir James further added that the Fly Agaric, *Amanita muscaria*, was frequently found in woods and sheltered places, and was liable to be eaten in mistake for another member of the same family, *Amanita rubescens*, or Warty Caps, an edible fungus which it very closely resembled.

Reference was made to the Government publication, *Edible and Poisonous Fungi*, and to the book *Neglected Edible Treasures*, written by the deceased, and pictures of the fungi in question were passed round among the jury.

Questioned with regard to the eggs, bread, coffee, whiskey and other articles of diet found in "The Shack," Sir James said he had subjected them all to careful analysis, without discovering anything of a deleterious character.

DECEASED SEEN GATHERING FUNGI

Dr. Hughes of Bovey Tracey, who performed the autopsy, said that he had found the heart of the deceased very greatly dilated, a symptom characteristic of poisoning by *Amanita muscaria*.

Harold Coffin, a labourer, gave evidence that he ad met with deceased on the morning of October 17th. e had a satchel slung over his shoulder, and appeared be searching for something on the ground. The time ould be about 8 a.m. Deceased was then entering a nall wood situated in the valley below Manaton. The itness had frequently seen deceased wandering about e country, sometimes with a sketching-easel and metimes gathering plants and roots. Deceased had metimes conversed with the witness about making a eal of unnatural things, such as nettles and toad-ools, and witness had always supposed him to be a tle peculiar in his head.

Henry Trefusis, a carrier, stated that he had de-vered a loaf of bread, a pound of shin of beef and her provisions to "The Shack," at 10.30 a.m., on hursday, October 17th. Deceased had called out to m from the outhouse to put the goods on the window-ll. As far as he could see and hear, deceased was then his usual health and spirits.

Mr. Lathom, recalled, confirmed his previous state-ent that Mr. Harrison had spoken to him on the ednesday evening about his intention of gathering ngi the next day, and had mentioned a name sembling "Warty Hats" or "Warty Caps."

The coroner, in summing up the evidence to the ry, laid stress on the danger of experimenting in nusual articles of diet. It was notorious, he said, that her nations, such as the French, were accustomed to at many natural products, such as frogs, snails, dande-ons and various kinds of fungi, which in this country ere considered unfit for human food. Such experi-ents, when conducted by highly expert persons, might metimes turn out well, but, on the other hand,

nobody was infallible, and undoubtedly a wise caution was in most cases to be preferred. Sir James Lubbock had cited some very sad instances of unfortunate children who had succumbed to the effects of accidentally eating those dangerous toadstools which unhappily grew in such great profusion in many parts of the country, and he would like to urge on all parents the advisability of strictly forbidding their boys and girls to tamper with anything which they might pick up on their rambles. The present case would serve as a terrible warning, which he hoped would not soon be forgotten. It was most unfortunate that, owing to the remote situation of "The Shack" and the unlucky absence of Mr. Lathom in London, there should have been no help at hand when the deceased was overtaken by this terrible accident. The circumstances of his lonely and agonising death were such as to arouse the deepest compassion for the widow and son of the deceased.

The jury, after a few minutes' consultation, brought in a verdict of Accidental Death due to poisoning by *Amanita muscaria*. The foreman said that the jury desired to express their deep sympathy with the bereaved family. They would also like to add a rider to the effect that teachers in the schools of the surrounding districts should be encouraged to warn their pupils against the eating of toadstools, and that charts displaying the various kinds of poisonous fungi should be hung in the classrooms.

[An article on Fungi, by Professor Brookes, the distinguished naturalist, will be found on p. 8.]

49. Statement by Paul Harrison

I was in Africa when the news of my father's death reached me. The work on which I was engaged was nearly completed, and I at once made arrangements for handing over the concluding portions of the job and returning to England. It took a little time to settle all this and to arrange for my journey to the coast, and it was not till the 6th of January, 1930, that I arrived in London.

From the moment that I heard the cause of death assigned, I was positively convinced that there was no accident about it. My father's expert knowledge of fungi was very great; and he was a man of almost exaggerated precision in matters of this kind. It was entirely incredible to me that he could ever have mistaken a stool of *Amanita muscaria* for *Amanita rubescens*, even in the gathering of it; far more so that he could have peeled and prepared the fungus for eating without noticing the difference. To the average coroner's jury, accustomed to dealing with school-children and trippers, such a mistake would no doubt seem perfectly natural; but my father was no more likely to take *Muscaria* for *Rubescens* than to take a piece of cast-iron for a piece of chilled steel. I immediately scouted the whole idea of accident. Two possibilities remained for me to investigate. Either my father, in his unselfish devotion to the worthless woman he had married, had destroyed himself by a painful method which would look like accident and so disarm suspicion; or else he had been murdered. In either case, I was determined that the woman should not benefit by the crime which she had caused.

Feeling as I did towards Margaret Harrison, I could

not bring myself to take up my residence at my father's house. I therefore took a room at an hotel in the Bloomsbury district, which has the advantage of being central, and set myself to examine the problem under all its aspects.

I read and re-read carefully all the newspaper reports of the inquest, and also all the letters which my father had written to me during the last two years. The most important of these latter I have included among the documents submitted to you. There was another, the essentials of which are covered by Mr. Munting's statement, which mentioned that Miss Agatha Milsom had had to be " put away," and that the character of Mr. Munting was accordingly considered to have been cleared from suspicion.

I fastened at once upon this incident. I had naturally never believed that Miss Milsom's version of this episode was the true one. I believed my father to have been quite correct in his original suspicions. Miss Milsom's illness had, I decided, enabled Munting to pull the wool over his victim's eyes very nicely. Margaret Harrison and Munting had been corresponding all along, until the convenient decease of my father set them free to come together again after a decent interval.

This suggestion led me directly to the idea of suicide. In some way my father's eyes had been opened to what was going on ; and the agent must undoubtedly have been Lathom. He was Munting's friend and, deliberately or unconsciously, he must have let fall some words during his stay at " The Shack " which made the situation plain. I thought it probable that this young man had played a double-faced part, and forwarded Munting's interests under pretence of being friendly with my

ther. As regards the idea of murder, Munting ap-
eared to have an alibi. His arrival with Lathom on
ie Saturday night had been witnessed, and I did not
ink it likely that he could have made any earlier
ppearance in that sparsely-populated district without
eing seen. It seemed possible that he and Lathom had
een confederates, and committed the murder in col-
sion ; but at the moment I was inclined to think that
y father had been hounded into self-destruction by
is precious pair, or rather trio.

It seemed to me that any first step must be to see
Iargaret Harrison. She would learn before long that
was in London, from my father's solicitors, with
hom I necessarily had business. It was better, there-
re, to call on her at once, both to prevent her from
specting my suspicions and to keep up appearances
the eyes of the neighbourhood.

Accordingly, I went round to Whittington Terrace
n the day after my arrival. I sent up my name by
ie maid (a new girl since my time), and, after a short
terval, Margaret Harrison came down to me. She
as dressed in deep mourning, very fashionably cut,
nd came up to me with the gushing manner which
had always so greatly disliked.

"Oh, Paul!" she said, "isn't this terrible? How
readful it has been for you, poor dear, all that long
ay away! I am so glad you have managed to get
me!"

"If you are," I said, "it must be for the first time
n record."

Her face took on the sulky look I knew so well.

"I know you never liked me, Paul," she said, "but
rely this is hardly the time to bear a grudge."

"Perhaps not," said I, "but it hardly seems

worth while to pretend that you are delighted to see me."

"As you like," she replied. "We may as well sit down, anyway."

She sat down, and I went over and stood by the window.

"You are staying here, of course?" she inquired, after a short silence.

I replied that I preferred to live at an hotel for the present, because it was more convenient for business.

"Of course," she said, "you will have a lot of things to see about. I quite understand. I kept the house on, because I didn't know what your plans would be. But perhaps you think it would be better to give it up?"

"Do just as you like," I answered. "The furniture is yours, I believe?"

"Yes; but this place is really more than I want when I am by myself. Besides"—here she gave an affected shudder—"it seems, well, haunted, rather. If you are not coming here, I think I shall give it up and take a couple of rooms somewhere. I can look after your things till you get settled."

I thanked her, and asked if she had made any plans for the future.

"None at all," she said. "I feel rather stunned, just at the moment. It has been such a shock. I shall wait for a little time, anyhow, and see how things turn out. I shall be rather lost at first. We saw so few people—I have rather lost touch."

"You have all my father's friends," I said.

"Oh, but they are not *my* friends. They only used to come to tea and dinner and so on. They wouldn't want me. I should only be an intruder. And, of course,

hey are all much older than I am. We should have eally nothing in common."

" Yes," I said, " you are a young woman, Margaret. You will probably marry again before very long."

She made a great display of indignation.

" Paul ! How can you say such a heartless thing, and your poor father only just passed away ! Anybody would think you didn't care for him at all. But I suppose a father isn't the same thing as a husband."

I was nauseated.

" You need not trouble to display all this feeling on my account," I said. " It was quite enough to make him as unhappy as you did while he was alive, without playing the broken-hearted widow."

" You are very like him, you know," she answered. ' You have just his way of snubbing and repressing people. You don't seem to understand that everybody can't keep their feelings bottled up as you do. It was not my fault that he was unhappy. I think he had an unhappy nature."

" That is nonsense," I said, " and you know it. My father was a most simple, friendly, companionable man —only you never would be a real wife to him."

" He wouldn't let me," she said. " I know we didn't hit it off very well, at the end, but I did try, Paul. I did, indeed. In the beginning I was ready to give him all the love and affection that was in me. But he didn't like it. He dried me up. He broke my spirit, Paul."

" My father was not a demonstrative man," I said, ' but you know quite well that he was proud of you and devoted to you. If you had heard him speak of you as I have heard him——"

" Ah ! " she said, quickly, " but I never did. That was the trouble. What is the good of being praised

behind one's back if one is always being scolded and snubbed to one's face? It only makes it worse. Every one thinks one has such a good husband, and that one ought to be so happy and grateful—and all the time they never know what one is suffering from unkind words and cold looks at home."

"Many women would envy you," I said. "Would you rather have had a husband who was all charming manners at home and unfaithful the minute your back was turned?"

"Yes," she said, "I would."

"I can't understand you," I said. "You ought to be ashamed to speak like this."

"No," she said, "you can't understand. That's it. Neither could he."

"All I understand is that you ruined his life, and drove him to a dreadful death," I burst out. I had not meant to go so far, but I was too angry to think what I was saying.

"What do you mean?" she said. "Oh, no—you can't think that he—— But why should he?"

I had gone too far now to retreat, and I told her what I thought.

"You are quite wrong," she said. "He wouldn't have done that."

"He would have done anything for you," I cried angrily, "anything. Even to laying down his life to set you free——"

"Even to sacrificing his reputation as a connoisseur of fungi?" she interrupted, with an unpleasant smile.

"Even that," I answered. "It's all very well for you to sneer—you never cared for his interests—you didn't understand them—you understand nothing at

ll, and you care for nothing except your twopenny a'penny emotions."

" I do know this," she said steadily, " that if your ather had thought that I wanted to be free of him—hich he didn't, because he had too good an opinion f himself—but if he had, he would have taken care didn't get rid of him without a row. He loved making ows. He wouldn't have made things easy for me. He ouldn't have missed the opportunity of rubbing it in."

Her expression was as ugly and common as her words. felt that I could not control myself much longer and ad much better go.

" I repeat," said I, " that you never understood my ather, and you never will. It isn't in you. I don't think 's any good prolonging this discussion. I had better e going. Can you give me Mr. Munting's address ? "

I hoped to have frightened her by the sudden question, but she only looked mildly astonished.

" Mr. Munting ? I'm sure I don't know. I've only een him once since he was married, and that was at ne Royal Academy. And at the—the inquest, of course. think he lives in Bloomsbury somewhere. I expect e's in the telephone-book."

I thanked her, and took my leave. Married ! My ather had never thought to mention that. It upset all ıy ideas. Because, if Munting was married, then what bject could there have been in my father's suicide—r murder, whichever it was ? His death would have ft Margaret no nearer to marrying Munting. And ny other relation could have been carried on perfectly ell, whether my father was alive or not. Certainly, e might simply have destroyed himself in sheer despair nd misery, unable to bear the dishonour. But it did ot seem so likely.

This news made me alter my plans. I determined not to go and see Munting at once. It would be better, I thought, to get hold of Lathom, and see if I could obtain any light on the question from him.

A little inquiry among the dealers produced Lathom's address. He was living in a studio in Chelsea. I presented myself at the place the next morning, and was received by a vinegary-looking elderly woman in a man's cap, who informed me that Mr. Lathom was still in bed.

As it was already eleven o'clock, I handed her my card and said I would wait. She ushered me into an extremely untidy studio, full of oil-paint tubes and half-finished canvases, and waddled away with the card towards an inner door.

Before reaching it, however, she turned back, sidled up to me and said in a glutinous whisper :

" Begging your pardon, Mr. 'Arrison, but was you any relation to the pore gentleman wot died so mysterious ? "

" What business is that of yours ? " I snapped. She nodded with ghoulish enjoyment.

" Oh, no offence, sir, no offence. There ain't no need to take a person up so sharp. That was a funny thing, sir, wasn't it ? You'd be 'is son, per'aps ? "

" Never you mind who I am," I said. " Take my card to Mr. Lathom and say I should be glad if he could spare me a few minutes."

" Oh, 'e'll spare you a few minutes, sir, I shouldn't wonder. Look funny if 'e didn't, sir, wouldn't it ? There's lots of things as 'ud look funny, I daresay, if we knew the rights on 'em."

" What are you getting at ? " I said, uneasily.

" Ho, nothink, sir ! " Nothink ! If you ain't a

relation it ain't nothink to you, is it, sir? People do go off sudden-like, sometimes, and nobody to blame. There's lots of things 'appens every day more than ever gets into the papers. But there! That ain't nothink to you, sir."

She sidled away again, grinning unpleasantly. I heard her talking and a man's voice replying, and presently she shuffled back again.

"Mr. Lathom says 'e'll be with you in five minutes, sir, if you will be so good as to wait. 'E'll come fast enough, sir, don't you be afraid. A very agreeable gentleman is Mr. Lathom, sir. I been doin' for 'im over three months, now, ever since 'e come over from France. Some time in October that would be, sir, before this 'ere sad accident 'appened. Mr. Lathom was very much upset about it, sir. You'd 'ardly 'ave known 'im for the same gentleman w'en 'e came back after the inquest. Looked as if 'e'd been seein' a ghost—that white and strange 'e was. A terrible sight the pore gentleman must 'a been. A crool way to die. But there! We must all die once, sir, mustn't we? And if it ain't one way it's another, and if it ain't sooner it's later. Only some folks is misfortunit more than others. Would you care for a cup of tea, sir, while you're waitin'?"

I accepted the tea, to get rid of her. The stove, however, turned out to be in a corner of the studio, and having lit the gas and put the kettle on, she returned. All the time she was speaking, she rubbed one skinny hand over the other with a curious, greedy action.

"Very strange 'ow things turns out, ain't it, sir? There was a gentleman lived down our street, a cats'-meat man 'e was, and the best cats'-meat in the neighbour'ood—thought very 'ighly of by all, 'e was.

'E married a girl out of one of them shops w'ere the sells costooms on 'ire purchase. They ain't no good t nobody, them places, if you asks me. Well, 'e die sudden."

"Did he?"

"Ho, yes! very sudden, 'e died. A very 'ot summe it was, and they brought it in 'e'd got the dissenter with eatin' somethink as didn't agree with 'im. So i may 'a bin, far be it from me to say otherwise. But afor the year was up *she'd* gone and married the young ma wot was manager of the clothes-shop. A good marriag it was for 'er, too. Ho, yes! *She* didn't lose nothink b 'er 'usband dyin' w'en 'e did, if you understand me sir."

I made no answer. She took the kettle off and filled the tea-pot.

"Now, that's a nice cup o' tea, sir. You won't find nothink wrong with *that.* That's 'olesome, that is. knows 'ow to make the sort of tea that gentlemen like Cutts is my name, Mrs. Cutts. They all knows me abou 'ere. I been doin' for the artists this thirty year, and I'm up to all their goin's-on. I knows 'ow to cook thei breakfisses and look after their bits of paintings and sich, an' w'en to speak an' w'en to 'old my tongue, sir That's wot they pays me for."

"Thank you," I said, "it's an excellent cup o tea."

"Yes, sir, thank you, sir. My name is Cutts, if you should ever be a-wantin' me. Anybody in these studios will tell you we're to find Mrs. Cutts. 'Ere's Mr. Lathom a'comin', sir."

She lurched away as Lathom emerged from his bedroom.

I will admit that the first impression he made upon

e was a good one. His appearance was clean, and his anners were pleasant.

" I see Mrs. Cutts has given you a cup of tea," he d, when he had shaken hands. " Won't you have a ot of breakfast with me? "

I thanked him, and said I had already breakfasted.

" Oh, I suppose you have," he answered, smiling. We're rather a late crowd in these parts, you know. ou won't mind if I carry on with my eggs and con? "

I begged him to use no ceremony, and he produced me eatables from a cupboard.

" It's all right, Mrs. Cutts," he shouted. " I'll do e cooking. This gentleman wants to talk business."

The noise of a broom in the passage was the only swer.

" Well now, Mr. Harrison," said Lathom, dropping s breezy manner, " I expect you have come to hear ything I can tell you about your father. I can't y, of course, how damned sorry I am about it. As u know, I wasn't there at the time——"

" No," I said, " and I don't want to distress you by ing into details and all that. It must have been a eat shock to you."

" It certainly was."

" I can see that," I added, noticing how white d strained his face looked. " I only wanted to k you—after all, you were the last person to see m——"

" Not the last," he interrupted, rather hastily. " That an Coffin saw him, you know, gathering the—the etched fungi—and the carrier saw him later still, er I had left the place."

" Oh, yes—I didn't mean quite that. I mean, you

were the last friend to see and talk to him intimately
" Quite, quite—just so."

" I wanted to hear from you whether you wer
yourself, quite satisfied about it—satisfied that it real
was an accident, that is ? "

He put the bacon into the pan, where it sputtered
good deal.

" What's that ? I didn't quite catch."

" Were you satisfied it was an accident ? "

" Why, of course. What else could it have beer
You know, Mr. Harrison, I hate to say anything abo
your father that might seem—to blame him in a
way, that is—but, of course, I mean it is a very da
gerous thing to experiment with wild fungi. Anybo
would tell you the same thing. Unless you are a ve
great expert—and even then one is liable to ma
mistakes."

" That is what is troubling me," I said. " My fath
was a very great expert, and he was not at all a ma
to make mistakes."

" None of us are infallible."

" Quite so. But still. And it was odd that it shou
have happened just at the very time you were away

" It was very unfortunate, certainly." He kept h
eyes on the bacon, while he prodded it about with
fork. " Damnably unfortunate."

" So odd and so unfortunate that I cannot he
thinking there may have been a reason for it ! "

Lathom took two eggs and cracked them carefull
" How so ? "

" You are aware, perhaps, that my father was—n
altogether happy in his married life."

He gave an exclamation under his breath.

" Did you speak ? "

'No—I have broken the yolk, that's all. I beg ur pardon. You are asking me rather a delicate estion."

'You may speak frankly to me, Mr. Lathom. If you v much of my father's family life, you must have ticed that there were—misfits."

'Well, of course—one sees and hears little things casionally. But many happily-married people spar times, don't they? And—well—there was a difference age and all that."

'That is the point, Mr. Lathom. Without necessarily ing anything harsh about my father's wife, it is a t that a young woman, married to an older man, y, not unnaturally, tend to turn to someone more her own age."

He muttered something.

'In such a case my father, who was the most unself-garding man who ever breathed, might have thought his duty to give her back her liberty."

He turned round swiftly.

'Oh, no!" he said, "surely not! That's a dreadful a, Mr. Harrison. It never occurred to me. I am sure I can put it out of your mind." He hesitated. "I nk——" he went on, with a troubled look, "oh, yes, m sure you need not think that."

'Are you quite sure? Did he never say anything?"

'He never spoke of his wife except in terms of e deepest affection. He thought very highly of ."

'I know. More highly than she—more highly than y woman perhaps could deserve."

'Perhaps."

'But," I said, "that very affection would have en all the more reason for him to—to take himself

out of her life in the most complete and unanswerab way."

"I suppose so—from that point of view."

"And, if it was so, I should like to know it. Will yo tell me, Mr. Lathom, on your honour and witho concealment, whether there was anything between m father's wife and your friend Mr. Munting?"

"Good Lord, no!" he said, taking the pan off th fire and shovelling the eggs and bacon out into a plat "Nothing of the sort."

"Just a minute," said I. "Mr. Munting is you friend, and you want to be loyal to him. That's obviou And I'm aware I'm asking you to do one of tho things which people with public-school educations don do. I am not a public-school man myself, and you mu excuse me if I suggest that just for once you shoul come down to brass tacks and cut out the Eton-and Harrow business. My father has died, and I want you personal assurance that he did not kill himself o your friend Munting's account. Can you give it t me?"

"On my word of honour, there was not the ver slightest attachment or understanding of any kin between Mrs. Harrison and Jack Munting. They rathe disliked each other, if anything. Jack was married la Easter to a very charming woman, with whom he i much in love. He never gave a thought to Mrs. Harr son, or she to him."

I felt sure he believed what he said.

"Wasn't there a disturbance of some kind?" I asked

"Oh, yes." A cloud passed over his face. "There wa That wretched, potty woman, Miss Milsom, invente some sort of story. But it was the most absolut rubbish. And Mr. Harrison came to see what utte

nsense it all was. My dear man, the woman's in an ylum."

" There was no foundation for it, then ? "

" None whatever."

" Then why did your friend Munting take it ng down, and let himself be kicked out of the use ? "

" I wish you wouldn't keep on calling him ' my friend unting,' as if you took us for a pair of undesirables," retorted, irritably. He picked at his eggs and bacon, d pushed the plate away again.

" What else could he do but go ? Your father was rfectly unreasonable—wouldn't have listened to the rchangel Gabriel. Anyway, the more you protest out these matters, the less you're believed. Munting d the right thing—cleared out and married somebody e. Couldn't have a row with a man twice his age, u know."

I got up.

" Thank you very much, Mr. Lathom. I'm sorry to ve troubled you. I am very glad to have your as- rance. Mr. Munting is in town, I suppose ? "

" You're not going to rake it all up with him ? "

" I should feel more satisfied if I had had a word with n," I answered.

" I wouldn't. You can take my word for it. I mean say, there's Mrs. Munting to be considered."

" I shouldn't say anything to her. After all, it's surely tural enough that I should wish to have Mr. unting's account of the business."

" Yes—oh yes, I suppose it is." He still looked worried d dissatisfied. " Well, good-bye. If you really must Munting, here's his address."

As I opened the door of the studio, I nearly tripped

over Mrs. Cutts, who was washing the linoleum. Sh
came and let me out at the house-door.

"Puttin' yer money on the wrong horse, young ma
ain't you?" she whispered.

"Look here," I said, "you know something abo
this."

"That's as may be," said she, slyly. "Mrs. Cut
knows 'ow to govern 'er tongue. An unruly membe
ain't it, sir? That's wot the Bible says."

"I've no time to waste," I answered, "if you ha
anything to say to me, you will find me at my hotel.
I mentioned the name, and then, with a certai
disgust at the business, slipped half a crown into h
hand.

She curtseyed, and I left her bobbing and dippi
on the doorstep.

I cursed myself for a fool as I set off to find Muntin
Undoubtedly Lathom would have warned him b
telephone of what to expect. I was sure of it when
saw him. He struck me as conceited and pretentious-
the usual type of modern literary man."

He was perfectly polite, however; assured me in
tone of the utmost sincerity that the story abo
himself and Margaret Harrison was entirely unfounde
and referred me back to Lathom for evidence as
my father's state of mind in the week preceding h
death.

Finding myself quite unable to penetrate th
polished surface of propriety, I took my leave. Th
manner of both men left me in no doubt that the
was something to conceal, but I could get no farth
than a moral certainty.

Mrs. Cutts seemed to offer the best hope of info
mation, but I could not as yet reconcile myself

ıdling so dirty a tool. It occurred to me that it ght possibly be worth while to get hold of Miss lsom. I was not at all clear in my mind that her dness might not have some method in it.

At first I could not think how to trace her. I could ve asked Margaret Harrison, of course, but I did t want to do that. Finally, I decided to call on the al padre, the Rev. Theodore Perry, and see if he ew where his lost sheep had strayed to.

I knew him well, of course, and it did not seem natural that I should ask after the welfare of a woman o had been for some time in my father's employ- nt. I sandwiched the question in, in the course of asual conversation, and he told me at once what he ew.

"Poor woman, I'm afraid she is not altogether rmal. One hopes it is only a passing phase. I don't ite know where she is—one of these nursing-homes the modern sort, I think. Her sister, Mrs. Fare- ther, would be able to tell you. No, I don't suppose y are very well off. The fees in these places are h. In the days of faith—or superstition, if you e—a convent or a béguinage would have provided proper asylum for such a case, with some honest rk to do and a harmless emotional outlet—but wadays they make you pay for everything, not y your pleasures."

He gave me Mrs. Farebrother's address, and I said would see what could be done. He smiled at me a futile, clerical way, and said it would be a work charity.

I left him, feeling anything but charitable, and went see Mrs. Farebrother. She seemed to be a good, nest, sensible woman, worried by family and financial

cares, and accepted gratefully my suggestion of
small pension, during the period that her sister migh
be requiring medical care.

The interview with Agatha Milsom was a painfu
one to me. The woman is undoubtedly quite un
balanced, with a disagreeable sex-antagonism at th
bottom of her mania. According to her, my fathe
had treated his wife with abominable cruelty, and
was obliged to listen for a long time to her ramblin
accusations. The name of John Munting roused he
to such excitement that I was afraid she would mak
herself ill ; unfortunately, I could get nothing reliabl
out of her. For one thing, she was obsessed with th
idea that he had had designs upon her maiden modesty
and for another, many of her statements were s
ludicrous that they cast suspicion over the rest.

As regards my father, however, I obtained on
thing. I suggested that her memory of certain domesti
incidents might be at fault, and, in proof of her asser
tions she promised to get back from her sister, and sen
to me, all the letters she had written home durin
the previous two years.

It seemed to me that, since her mental deterioratio
had come on only gradually, the letters written at th
time might possibly be considered to attain a reason
able level of accuracy. She kept her promise, an
from this correspondence I selected the letters c
relevant date, and these are the documents include
in this dossier. It will be seen that great allowanc
must be made for bias ; that much conceded, the state
ments may, I think, be accepted as having a basis i
fact.

I need not say how distressing they were to me. The
cast a light upon the miserable domestic condition

hich my father had had to endure. I regretted most itterly that I had taken over that work in Central frica, thus leaving him to the undiluted companionip of a selfish, discontented wife and a semi-demented nd vulgar woman. My father was not the man to o abroad for the sympathy he could not find at ome, and it was no wonder that he had welcomed ne acquaintanceship of two young men who could, t least, make some pretence of entering into his nterests.

But the thing which emerged from the letters with tartling illumination was the intimate footing upon hich Lathom had stood with the whole household. s may be seen by the few letters included above, my ather was by no means a gossipy correspondent, and had not realised that Lathom had become so much f a tame cat about the drawing-room. I had thought f him as being my father's friend almost entirely, nd I believe that my father himself took that view, nd, wittingly or unwittingly, gave me that impression. ut it now seemed clear to me that this was not so, nd that, what with my father's innocent pleasure in ne apparent admiration and friendliness of this rilliant young man, and what with the perverse misonception of the wretched Agatha Milsom, we had l been " led up the garden," as the expression is.

I saw now why both Lathom and Munting, standing y one another in a conspiracy of silence, had been ble to deny with such obvious sincerity that there ad ever been an undue intimacy between Munting nd Margaret Harrison. Lathom had said that my ther's last days had been free from suspicion ; I w now that this was possible. I also saw why Lathom ad been so unwilling that I should ask Munting

the same question, and why Munting had referre me back to Lathom for the answer. Munting mus I thought, be considered cleared of any offence excep a refusal to betray his friend's confidence ; and I wa obliged to confess that most people would think h had actedly rightly. Lathom, too, had kept to th code of what is usually called honour in these matter As for Margaret Harrison—but from her I had neve expected anything but lies.

But if this was the truth, why should my father hav committed suicide ? For I still did not believe in th theory of accident. Either something must hav opened his eyes during Lathom's visit to town, or els that other, darker suspicion, which I had hardly like to glance at was only too well-founded.

I am a business man. I have the business man' liking for facts. To me, an expert's knowledge is fact. Experts occasionally make mistakes, but to m it appears far less probable that an expert should b mistaken than that an artist and a woman should b unprincipled. And I cannot make it too clear tha my father's expert knowledge in the matter of fung was to be trusted. I would as cheerfully stake m life on the wholesomeness of a dish prepared by m father as on the stability of a girder-stress calculate by my chief, Sir Maurice Berkeley. But I would no venture a five-pound note on the honesty or virtu of such people as Lathom and Margaret Harrison.

But to prove the truth of my suspicions, I neede more facts—the sort of facts that a jury would accep To them, my father's knowledge of fungi would no be a fact at all.

I turned the matter over in my mind, and eventu ally came to the conclusion that, whether I liked i

not, I must see the woman Cutts. I hoped that e would come to me, but several days passed and I w nothing of her. Either the creature had no facts sell, or she was holding off in the hope of securing etter terms. I saw through her artifice well enough, ut I saw also that she had me at a disadvantage. ventually, and with great reluctance, I wrote to her follows, addressing the letter to Lathom's studio.

"Mrs. Cutts—

"Madam—When I saw you the other morning at Mr. Lathom's studio, you suggested that you might be in a position to do some work for me. I shall possibly be requiring some assistance of this kind in the near future, and shall be obliged if you would call on me one evening at my hotel to discuss the matter."

On the second day after dispatching this, I was formed that a lad was waiting downstairs to see e. I went down and found a ferrety-eyed youth, ho introduced himself as Archie Cutts.

"Oh, yes," I said, "you have come about the work mentioned to your mother."

"Yes, sir," he replied. "Mother says as she can't ring it 'ere, not 'avin' the tools by 'er, but if you as to come down to our place on Friday, the party she obliges bein' out that night, she would be willing make an arrangement."

This was disagreeable.

"If I am to take that trouble," said I, "I shall ant to know, first, whether your mother is likely be able to do what I want."

He looked cunningly at me with his shifty eyes.

"Mother says she could show you letters from a

lady as you know very well, only she won't trus 'em to me, bein' valuable to 'er and not wantin' t lose 'em."

"Oh, I see," said I, loudly, "testimonials, eh Letters of recommendation. I see. And your mothe thinks she understands what is required and woul be able to give satisfaction?"

"Yes, sir."

"Did she say anything about terms?"

"She says she'll leave that to you, sir, w'en yo sees the work."

"Very well." There was nothing to be got b argument. "Tell your mother I will try and find time to call on her on Friday evening."

"Yes, sir. Nine o'clock would suit mother best.'

I made the appointment for nine, and gave th lad a shilling for his trouble. At nine o'clock on th Friday evening I found myself knocking at a dilapi dated door in a long, drab street of very squalid houses. The ferret-eyed lad let me in, and I saw, with considerable repulsion, my former acquaintance, seated in some pomp at a round table, containing a lamp a wool mat and a family Bible.

She greeted me with a condescending nod, and th youth withdrew.

"Well, now," I said, "Mrs. Cutts, you have asked me to come and see you, and I hope you are no wasting my time, because I am a very busy man."

This forlorn effort to establish my dignity made no impression on her.

"That's for you to say, sir," said she. "I wasn' for intrudin' on you. I am a respectable woman thank God, and can maintain myself in my statio by 'ard work, and never 'ad no complaints. Not bu

ot I'd be willin' to oblige a gentleman if 'e was equirin' my services, not bein' too proud to do a vour."

"Quite so," said I, "and if you can do the ork I want, I will see that it is made worth your hile."

"Wot sort of work was you thinkin' of, sir?"

"I gathered from what you said to me," I answered, that you thought you might be able to throw some ght on the circumstances of my father's death."

"That's as may be. There's ways and ways of yin'. Some is took, and some takes French leave, nd others is 'elped out of life, ain't they, sir?"

"Have you got any information to show that my ather was helped out of life?"

"Well, there, sir. I wouldn't go for to say sech a ning—nor yet for to deny it, 'uman nature bein' that icked as you can see for yourself any Sunday in the *ews of the World*. But wot I says is, w'en persons wicked enough to 'ave goin's on be'ind a gentle- an's back, there's no knowin' wot may come of it, is ere?"

"You said you had letters to show me."

"Ah!" she nodded. "There's good readin' in tters sometimes, sir. There's letters as would be orth 'undreds of pounds in a court of law, to some eople as one might name."

"Come, come, Mrs. Cutts," said I, "very few letters re worth anything like that."

"That's not for me to judge, sir. If letters should rn out not to be worth nothin', why, they're easy estroyed, ain't they, sir? There's many a person daresay wishes that 'e, or it might be she, sir, 'ad estroyed the letters wot they 'ad written. I was never

one for writin' letters myself. A word's as good, an leaves nothin' but air be'ind it, that's wot I say. An them as leaves letters about casual-like, might often b grateful for a word of warnin' from them as is wiser' themselves."

Her screwed-up eyes twinkled with consciousness power.

"A word of warnin' is soon given, and may be wort 'undreds. I ain't got no call to press you, sir. I ain dependent on anybody, thank God."

"Look here," I said, briskly, "it's no use beatin about the bush. I must see these letters before I kno what they're worth to me. For all I know they're n worth twopence."

"Well, I ain't unreasonable," said the hag. "Fa and square is my motter. Ef I was to show you docky ments ter prove as your pa's missis was sweet on m young gentleman there, would that be worth anythin to you, sir?"

"That's rather vague," I fenced. "People may b fond of one another and no great harm done."

"Wot may seem no 'arm to some may be great 'ar to a right-thinking person," said Mrs. Cutts, unctu ously. "You can ask all about this neighbour'ood, si and they'll tell you Mrs. Cutts is a lawful marrie woman, as works 'ard and keeps 'erself to 'erself as th sayin' is. Not but wot there's a-many things as a 'ard workin' woman in these parts 'as to shet her eyes t and can't be blamed for wot is not 'er business. Bu there is limits, and w'en people is writin' to people isn't their own lawful 'usbands about bein' in th fambly way and about others as *is* their lawful 'usband not 'avin' the right to exist, and w'en them lawfu 'usbands dies sudden not so very long arter, then w

ses is, it might be worth while for them as is right-inkin' and 'ose place it is to interfere, to 'ave them ere dockyments kep' in a safe place."

I tried not to let her see how deeply I was interested these hints.

"This is all talk," I said. "Show me the letters, nd then we can get down to brass tacks."

"Ah!" said Mrs. Cutts. "And supposin' my young entleman should come 'ome and look for them letters, it might be to-night, wot a peck of trouble I might e in. Do right and shame the devil is my motter, but notters won't feed a fambly o' children when a 'ard-orkin' woman loses 'er job—now, will they, sir?"

I thought the time had come to lend an air of busi-ess to the bargain. I drew a five-pound note from my ocket, and let it crackle pleasantly between my fingers. er eyelids twitched, but she said nothing.

"Before we go any further," I said, "I must look t the letters and see that they are actually from the erson you mention, and that they are of genuine terest to me. In the meanwhile, since I have put ou to some trouble——"

I pushed the note towards her, but held my hand ver it.

"Well," she said, "I don't mind lettin' you 'ave a ok. Looks breaks no bones, as the sayin' is." She mbled in a remote pocket beneath her skirt and roduced a small packet of papers.

"My eyes ain't so good as they was," she added, ith sudden caution. "'Ere Archie!"

The ferrety youth (who must have been listening t the door) answered the summons with suspicious romptness. I noticed that he had provided himself ith a formidable-looking stick, and immediately

pushed my chair back against the wall. Mrs. Cutts slowly detached one letter from the bundle, and spread it out flat on the table, disengaging it from its folds with a well-licked thumb.

"W'ich one is this, Archie?"

The youth glanced sideways at the letter and replied:

"That's the do-something-quick-one, Mother."

"Ah! and w'ich is the one about the pore gentleman as was done in in a play?"

"'Ere you are, Mother."

She slid the letters across to meet my hand. I released the note; she released the letters and the exchange was effected.

These were the letters numbered 43 and 44, and dated August 2nd and October 5th respectively, as above. If you will glance back to them, you will see that they offered valuable evidence.

I at once recognised them for genuine documents in my stepmother's handwriting.

"How many letters have you?"

"Well, there's more than I 'ave 'ere. But them as I 'old in my 'and, w'ich makes eight, countin' them two, is the ones as 'ud interest anybody as wanted to know w'y a gentleman might die sudden."

"Are there any that say definitely how he died or what he died of?"

"No," said Mrs. Cutts, "I wouldn't deceive a gentleman like you, sir. Tell the truth, likewise fair and square. Them eight letters, sir, is wot they calls excitements to murder, and would be so considered by any party as might 'appen to receive them. But as for saying in so many words 'weed-killer' or 'prussic acid,' I will not say as you will find them words in black and white."

' That, of course, detracts from their value," I said, elessly. " These letters are evidence of sad im- rality, no doubt, Mrs. Cutts, but it's one thing to h a person dead and another to kill him."

' There ain't sech a great difference," said Mrs. tts, a little shaken. " It says in the Bible—' 'E that eth 'is brother is a murderer,' now, don't it, sir? d there's some as sits on juries 'as the same way thinkin'."

' Maybe," said I, " but all the same, it's not proof."

' Very good, sir," said Mrs. Cutts with dignity. " I uldn't contradict a gentleman. You 'and me them ers back, Archie. The gentleman don't want 'em. Mr. Lathom 'ad any sense 'e'd burn the rubbishin' ff, and so I'll tell 'im, clutterin' up the place."

' I don't say that, Mrs. Cutts," said I, holding on the letters. " They are of interest, but not of as much erest as I thought they might be. What value did ı think of placing on them? "

' To them as knew 'ow to use 'em "—here Mrs. Cutts peared to size me up from head to toe—" letters e them might be worth a 'undred pounds apiece."

' Rubbish," said I, " I'll give you fifty pounds for : lot, and that's more than they're worth."

I put the two letters back on the table and flicked them disdainfully.

' Fifty pound ! " shrieked Mrs. Cutts, " fifty pound ! .d me riskin' losin' a job as is worth more than that y day in recommendations and perks, not countin' ' money regular every week ! "

She gathered the letters together and began to tie : packet up again.

' Mr. Lathom 'ud give five times that much to know they wos safe," she added.

"Not he," said I. "I doubt if he has as much a a hundred pounds in the world. Whereas, if your so likes to come round with me to my hotel, I can giv him cash on the nail."

"No," said Mrs. Cutts, "I can't let them letters go Supposin' Mr. Lathom wanted to read 'em and the wasn't there."

"That's your affair," said I. "If you don't want t sell them, you can keep them. If I were you I'd pu them back quickly where you found them, and sa nothing to Mr. Lathom about it. There's such a thin as blackmail, you know, Mrs. Cutts, and judges ar pretty strict about it."

Mrs. Cutts laughed scornfully.

"Blackmail! Nobody ain't goin' to charge their selves with murder, and don't you think it."

"There's no murder there," said I. "Good night."

I rose to go. The woman let me get as far as the doo and then came after me.

"See 'ere, sir. You're a gentleman, and I don't wan to be 'ard on a gentleman wot's pore father 'as died sudden. Give me two 'undred pound, and I'll let ye take copies on 'em and Archie shall go with you and bring 'em back."

"Copies don't count so well in a court of law as originals," I said.

"They could be swore to," said Mrs. Cutts.

"Not at this time of night," said I.

The youth Archie leaned across and whispered to his mother. She nodded and smiled her unpleasant smile.

"See 'ere, sir, I'll risk it. Archie shall bring you them letters to your 'otel in the mornin' and you shall take copies and 'ave them swore to afore a lawyer. I

rsn't let you 'ave them, really I dursn't, sir. I'm
kin' a sad risk as it is for a respectable woman."
" Very well," I replied. " But copies are only worth
hundred pounds to me at the very outside."
" You're makin' a very 'ard bargain, sir."
" It's that or nothing," said I.
" Well, sir, if you say so. I'll send Archie round at
n o'clock, sir."
I agreed to this and walked away, glad to get out.
lay awake all night, fancying that Mrs. Cutts would
to Lathom in the interval and make better terms
ith him.
However, Archie was there with the letters in the
orning as agreed, and I took him and them round
a solicitor's, where typed copies were made and
orn. I also made an affidavit that I recognised the
riting of the originals as being in my stepmother's
ndwriting. I then paid the lad the agreed hundred
unds in Treasury notes, and dismissed him.
I have entered into all these details in order that
ere should be no doubt as to the genuineness of these
pies, and to make quite clear why I am unable at
e moment to forward the originals.
It is true that I could probably have forced Archie
to handing the letters over, since he had no right to
em. But several reasons urged me to take the other
urse. First, I had no legal right to them either, and
as not clear how my action might be looked upon
the police. Secondly, and this was more important,
could hardly hope that Lathom would not discover
eir absence, and, if he did, he might take fright and
ave the country and thus add great difficulties to my
sk. It would take some weeks, perhaps, to collect all
e evidence I needed, and by the time I was ready

to set the law in action, he might hide himself ve effectually. Thirdly, I did not wish to alienate M Cutts. I foresaw that she might be very useful, not on in bringing me fresh letters, if any arrived that thre further light on the business, but also in keeping wat on Lathom's movements. I suggested to Archie th there might be possibilities of further reward the future, and cautioned him against alarmi Lathom.

It is conceivable, however, that Mrs. Cutts may co sider it more advantageous to blackmail Lathom tha to assist me. Up to the moment of writing, he is st living in Chelsea, and apparently feels himself safe. B for all I know, Mrs. Cutts may have retained the lette and be blackmailing him on her own account. Or sh may have delivered her warning, and he may hav destroyed the letters and made himself (as he imagine secure. In the latter case it will, of course, be impo sible to produce the original documents in cour and then the certified copies will justify the existence.

Having obtained the evidence of the adultery, I no felt myself in a position to put pressure on Muntin and accordingly went round to see him again.

"I perfectly appreciate," I said, "the reasons fo your silence at our last interview. But if I tell you tha I have in my hands independent proof that Lathom wa Margaret Harrison's lover, perhaps you will feel just fied in assisting my inquiries."

He shrugged his shoulders.

"My dear man," he said, "if you have proof already I don't see what assistance you require. May I as what you call proof? After all, one doesn't make thes accusations without sufficient grounds."

"I have got the letters written to Lathom by my mother," I said, "and they leave the matter in no doubt whatever."

"Indeed?" said he. "Well, I won't ask you where you got them from. Private detective work is not in my line. If you really believe that your father was driven to do away with himself, I am extremely sorry—but what can one do about it?"

"I do not think so," I said. "I believe, and these letters afford strong evidence to my mind, that my father was cruelly and deliberately murdered by Lathom at Margaret Harrison's instigation. And I mean to prove it."

"Murdered?" he cried. "Good God, you can't mean that! That's absolutely impossible. Lathom may be a bit of a rotter in some ways, but he's not a murderer. I'll swear he isn't that. You're absolutely mistaken."

"Will you read the letters?"

"No," he said. "Look here. You're a man of the world. If things have got to this point, I don't mind admitting that Lathom did have some sort of an affair with Mrs. Harrison. I did what I could to make him stop it, but, after all, these things will sometimes happen. I told him it was a poor sort of game to play, and when I got the opportunity—over that Milsom affair—I told him I'd shut up about it on condition he cleared out. He assured me afterwards, in the most solemn way, that it was all finished with. Why, damn it, I asked him about it the very day we went down to Lanaton, and he repeated that the whole affair was absolutely over and done with."

"He was wise," I said dryly, "since he was taking you down there to view my father's dead body. Even

you might have suspected something if you had gon to 'The Shack' in the knowledge that it was t Lathom's interest to find what he did find."

His face changed. I had touched him on the ra somewhere.

"Did you, as a matter of fact, believe Lathom?"

"I believed him—yes." He turned his pipe though fully over between his fingers. "I believed that th affair had been put an end to. But I was not altogeth sure that Lathom's affection for Mrs. Harrison ha ceased."

"And when you found that my father had die so opportunely—did no suspicion enter you mind?"

"Well—I admit it did just pass through my min that Harrison might have done it himself. I—I didn want to believe it. I don't know that I did reall believe it. But it did occur to me as a possibility."

"Nothing more?"

"Absolutely nothing more."

"Will you read the letters, and tell me if, after that you still think there was nothing more?"

He hesitated.

"If you are so sure that Lathom is innocent, you may be able to prove his innocence."

He looked at me doubtfully, and slowly put ou his hand for the letters. He read the endorsement b the solicitor, and looked sharply at me again, but said nothing. I waited while he read the documents through —first quickly, then for a second time slowly and with greater attention.

"You will notice," I said, "that, shortly before the time when he told you the affair was over, Margare Harrison had written him a letter clearly indicating

at she believed herself to be about to have a child him."

" Yes, I see that."

" And that he was not informed that this belief was roneous, till after my father's death."

" No."

" Plenty of motive for murder there."

" Plenty of motive, certainly. But motive by itself nothing. Good heavens, man, if everybody committed urder because they had a motive, precious few of us ould die natural deaths."

" But you will admit that murder was being urged on him, in various ways, in all these letters."

" I wouldn't necessarily go so far as to admit that. rs. Harrison is an emotional, imaginative woman. ne picks up phrases out of books. Plenty of people lk in this vague way about love—about its being preme, and justifying itself, and sweeping obstacles ide and so on, without ever intending to put their ords into action. I've written that kind of thing myself in books."

" Very likely. As a modern novelist you need not be pected to uphold a high standard of morals. But in ractice, I take it, you would not wish to excuse or stify murder."

" No. I confess to an old-fashioned prejudice against urder. It may be inconsistent of me, but I do. And , I am sure, would Lathom."

" Lathom is obviously very much under the influence Margaret Harrison."

" I should have said it was the other way round."

" In some things. In theory, no doubt. But when it omes to doing things, I should say she was infinitely ore practical—and more unscrupulous. But say, if

you like, he is only under the influence of a stro passion—don't you think that might lead him to things which conflicted with his principles, or prej dices, or whatever you like to call them? Come no you have called me a man of the world. Murders a done every day, for much less motive than Latho had."

He drummed on the table.

"Well," he burst out at last, "I'll admit that. I admit—for the sake of argument—that Lathom *mig* have murdered your father, though I don't believe for a moment. But it was physically impossible. Ho could he? He was here in London all the time."

"That's where you can help me. Why was it in possible? How do you know it was impossible? Ca you prove that it was impossible?"

"I'm sure I can."

"Will you let me have all the facts you know abo the whole thing from the beginning?"

"Of course I will. Damn it all, if Lathom *did* do i he deserves everything that's coming to him. He have to be an absolute swine. Mind you, Lathom an I didn't always get on together, but—it's absurd. H can't have done it. But we've got to kill the possibility.

He began to walk up and down, visibly perturbe I waited. We were interrupted by a servant announcin dinner.

"You'll stay?" said Munting. "You must meet m wife. She has a very clear head for this kind of thing.

I accepted, not wishing to lose a day in getting t the bottom of the matter. We did not, of course, tal about the subject while the maid was in the room, bu after dinner we all went into the library, and ther outlined the story to Mrs. Munting. I mention he

t because she was able to contribute anything of eat value to the discussion (though, being a woman, e was more willing than her husband to allow that a ung man might murder an older one for a woman's ke), but because she fetched out the letters which unting had written to her during his period of resi- nce at Whittington Terrace, in order to verify facts d dates. In the end, she handed the letters over to e in case I might find in them any clue or suggestion hich we had overlooked. Munting rather naturally jected to having his love-letters (if one can call these mbling effusions by that name) put into the hands of comparative stranger, but his wife, with that curious ck of delicacy which virtuous women often display, ughed, and said she was sure I should not pay any tention to the personal passages.

"Mr. Harrison is not proposing to publish your ife and Letters, you know," she said.

This childish remark seemed to amuse Munting. e said : "No ; I fancy I'm safe with him," and raised o further objection. Probably his vanity was sufficient assure him that the exposure of his intimate feelings as bound to leave a favourable impression. Indeed, is obvious that, even in writing to his fiancee, he as writing for effect half the time, and quite possibly ith an eye to future publication. With young men ce Beverley Nichols and Robert Graves, prattling in ublic about their domestic affairs, we need hardly pect to find any decent reticence among the smart ovelists of to-day.

Taking the question of *Motive* as settled for the oment, we proceeded to discuss the subjects *Means* d *Opportunity*. Under these heads, the Muntings put rward a number of objections to the murder theory,

and I was bound to recognise that they looked suffi ciently formidable. Here is the schedule which I drew up immediately after this conversation.

POINTS TO BE INVESTIGATED IN CONNECTION WITH THE DEATH OF GEORGE HARRISON

A. *Means*

1.—Did Harrison really die of muscarine poisoning?

Muscarine (the poisonous principle of *Amanita muscaria*) was obtained in large quantities from (*a*) the viscera ; (*b*) the bedclothes ; and (*c*) the half-eaten dish on the table.

The appearance of the body and the symptoms of the illness as deduced from the attendant circumstances, were both consistent with muscarine poisoning.

Sir James Lubbock stated on oath that the cause of death was muscarine poisoning.

Questions : Could any other poison have produced similar effects or a similar chemical analysis? The analyst's attention having been specially directed to muscarine by the inquiries on the opening day of the inquest, did he, in fact, search for any poison other than muscarine?

NOTE : To write to Sir James Lubbock and put these points before him.

2.—In any case, how did the muscarine get into the body if we exclude the hypotheses of accident and suicide?

Supposing that Lathom had himself gathered the poisonous fungi and surreptitiously added them to the dish while it was in course of preparation, the murder

ight have been very simply accomplished. If he had erely put them into the basket with the genuine lible fungi gathered by my father, the latter would rtainly have discovered and thrown them away when reparing the dish. It would, therefore, be necessary wait, and add them when the process of cooking was ready so far advanced that the fungi had lost their haracteristic colour and shape.

On any ordinary occasion it would have been easy r Lathom to do this. It will be seen from the evidence the inquest that Lathom was often left at home in The Shack" while Harrison went sketching or otanising.

In the actual case there are difficulties, some of which ave to be considered under the heading "Opportunity."

Questions : Did Lathom know *Amanita muscaria* fficiently well to be able to find it and know it for hat it was? (*Answer* : Quite possibly my father might ave shown it to him and warned him against it. Or e might have studied the pictures in my father's ook or in some other book.)

If not, can he have got some accomplice to procure ie fungus for him? (Not impossible, but unlikely. ountry people usually pay little attention to fungi, nd the element of risk involved would be very reat.)

In what way was the dish of fungi cooked? It ould be easier to add a foreign substance to a stew, r example, which is done slowly and needs little perintendence, than to a grill or a fry, which takes nly a few minutes and is under the cook's eyes all ie time. (*Answer :* Munting, speaking from memory, inks the dish appeared more in the nature of a

stew. My father's letter to me (No. 15) of Octobe 22nd, 1928, is of interest in this connection.)

NOTE : To ask Sir James Lubbock if he can confirm this.

If Lathom was able to recognise and procure *Amanit muscaria*, could he not have boiled it on some previou occasion and added the poison to the stew in liqui form, so as to run less risk of my father's recognisin the intrusion of the wrong fungus ?

(*Answer :* Very probably.)

(As regards the question of Means, therefore, i seemed clear that Lathom might readily have ha access to the poison, and that there was no mechanica difficulty at all to prevent his having introduced i into the dish of mushrooms. When, however, w came to consider the subject of Opportunity, we wer faced with a more important set of difficulties.)

B. *Opportunity*

1.—At what time was the poison actually administere to Harrison ?

A terminus *a quo* is provided by the evidence o Harry Trefusis, who saw Harrison alive and apparentl well at 10.30 a.m. on Thursday. By this time, Lathom was presumably in the train and on his way to London

The terminus *ad quem* can be stated with rather les accuracy. From the fact, however, that the shin o beef delivered that morning was afterwards discovered still wrapped in its original paper, it appears quite certain that Harrison was rendered incapable o seeing to any household affairs before the evening From my knowledge of my father, I should be prepared

swear that he would certainly never have left meat this condition over-night. He would have put it to boil for stock, or, at the very least, would have ınsferred it to a plate—particularly in the case shin of beef, which, being glutinous, has a habit of cking to the wrapping-paper. When I stayed at The Shack" with my father, he was accustomed have his evening meal about seven o'clock. After is, he would wash the crockery and tidy the place , and put on any stock that might be required for e next day. He would then sit and read for an hour two, retiring to bed about ten, possibly taking a cup cocoa or some patent food before retiring.

It thus seems likely that the poison was taken be-ween the hours of 10.30 a.m. and 8 p.m., and most obably at or about seven p.m.

Question: What evidence have we that Lathom tually went to London by the 7.55 at all? Could have returned to "The Shack" surreptitiously ıring the interval? By hiring a motor-bicycle or r, he might easily have made his way back from ovey Tracey or (if this might appear too obvious) om Bramley Halt, Heathfield, Teigngrace or Newton bot. He could then have lurked about in the neigh-urhood of "The Shack" till he saw Harrison go ıt, and taken the opportunity to add the poison to e dish or stock-pot.

NOTE: To inquire as to Lathom's movements in wn. If anybody met him there on Thursday morn-g, this hypothesis falls to the ground. If not, to ıd out whether he really entered the train at Bovey racey, and if anybody of his description hired any rt of motor vehicle at any point along the line.

This would not, in fact, cover every contingency for an active man might easily have walked the ten or twelve miles between Newton Abbot and "The Shack." A motor vehicle is perhaps more likely as providing a quicker get-away after the crime.

2.—Is it possible that the poisonous fungus, or liquid prepared from fungus, was added, not to the fungus gathered by my father on the Thursday, but to some other collection of fungus gathered the previous day?

This appears unlikely, for three reasons. First my father always made a great point of eating his fungi freshly gathered. It would have been quite unlike him to gather them over-night and eat them next day. He considered early morning the best time for picking fungus. He had stated his intention of gathering Warty Caps on the Thursday morning and was, in fact, seen apparently doing so by the witness Coffin. Secondly: If the fungi eaten on Thursday night were gathered the previous day, what became of those gathered on Thursday morning? They were not found in "The Shack." Thirdly: For Lathom's purpose it was necessary that Harrison should have had the intention of gathering Warty Caps, and no other kind of fungus, since this is the only variety which could reasonably be confused with *Amanita muscaria*. It would appear, therefore, more than a coincidence that my father should have been seen gathering fungus in a spot where Warty Caps were usually to be found. Of course, Lathom's evidence on this point is suspect, and verification is necessary.

Questions : Are Warty Caps (*Amanita rubescens*) tually plentiful in the spot where Harrison was seen Coffin ?

Can any of the contents of the dish of fungi actually identified as *Amanita rubescens ?*

When did Harrison mention to Lathom his intenon of gathering *Amanita rubescens*? This question important, because, if the poisonous fungi were troduced among the harmless ones in their natural ate, it is absolutely necessary that the two varieties ould bear at least a superficial resemblance to one nother. Even in a half-cooked state, there could no confusion between *Amanita muscaria* and, say, *antarelles* or *Bolitus edulis* or *Amanitopris fulva.* Unrtunately, no one can throw any light on this except athom himself, and it is not likely that he will tell e truth.

NOTE : To verify the habitat of *Amanita rubescens,* nd, if possible, its presence in the actual dish of fungi nalysed.

. *Further Questions and Objections* (Miscellaneous)

If Lathom was guilty of administering poison to arrison, why did he return to " The Shack " on Saturay ? Would it not have been wiser to remain in wn till the death was discovered ?

This is an objection which to me appears to carry me weight. I can, however, see certain considerions which might account for a proceeding so apparatly reckless from a practical point of view.

(*a*) Lathom may have wished to be on the spot to onceal any accidental traces of the crime. As we o not yet know his exact procedure, it is not certain

what these could have been—a bottle, perhaps, cor taining extract of *Amanita muscaria*, a pan in whic he had prepared it ; a book or papers containing notes traces of his previous arrival by motor-bicycle c otherwise ; possibly some letter or message left b Harrison, containing his own suspicions as to the mar ner of his death.

NOTE : Munting's opinion is that Lathom originall intended to remain alone in " The Shack " while h (Munting) went to fetch help, but when it came t the point found himself unable to face it. This i consistent with the above explanation, if we suppos that Lathom was overcome by fear or remorse a the sight of the body, and was thus prevented fro carrying out his design. From Munting's own state ment it will be seen that Lathom was in a nervou state from the moment of his meeting Munting i town, down to the time when the body was discovered

(*b*) Supposing the plot had failed to work, Harriso would have been expecting Lathom's return. Let u say he had discovered an *Amanita muscaria* amon his fungi—he would wonder how it had got there and if Lathom never turned up might conceive such suspicion of him as would put him on his guard agains any further attempts. On the other hand, he migh have mentioned to people in the neighbourhood tha Lathom was due to come back, in which case, the plo succeeding, Lathom's absence might have a suspicious look.

Further explanations suggested by the Muntings :

(*c*) Lathom (supposing him guilty) would probably have no idea when the death might be expected to

ke place. As Thursday, Friday and Saturday passed thout news, he might be overcome by nervous tlessness and an overwhelming anxiety to see for nself what was going on. (I suppose that from ists and persons of unbalanced temperament, such haviour may be expected, half-witted as it may pear.)

(*d*) The alleged hankering of a murderer to revisit e scene of the crime. (This I hold to be pure super- tion and quite baseless in fact.)

(*e*) Remorse. Perhaps Lathom regretted what he d done, and was making a belated effort to save arrison's life by fetching medical assistance before was too late. (In this suggestion, put forward by rs. Munting, the wish is probably father to the ought.)

Why did Lathom take Munting down to "The ack" with him? This again seems to me to have en the act of a madman. Unless, indeed, he was nning enough to foresee that this was exactly the pearance it *would* present, and was therefore the st defence he could put up against suspicion.

Further, of course, Munting provided Lathom with complete alibi for the whole of Saturday and an prejudiced witness as to the discovery of the body. ppose, for example, that Harrison, instead of having en dead six or seven hours, had been only just dead on the point of expiring when they got there, Munt- g could have given evidence that they had found n in that condition on their arrival.

On the other hand, Lathom was running a very ious risk, not only of defeating his own ends, but having the whole vile plot exposed. If they had nd Harrison still alive, they would have had no

choice but to summon a doctor immediately ; t
victim might have recovered, or at least recover
sufficiently to denounce Lathom.

NOTE—Is Munting entirely cleared from complici
in the murder? His behaviour has been suspicio
and he has withheld information as long as possib
Not to trust him too far.

Neither Munting nor his wife seems to find as mu
difficulty as I do about this part of the business. Th
agree that a man of Lathom's temperament, havi
committed a murder, would be afraid to be alor
and would take any risks to secure companionshi
They instance Patrick Mahon's incredible rashness
taking Miss Duncan to sleep at the Crumbles on t
very night after he had murdered Emily Kaye, a
while her dead body was actually lying in the ne
room. These people are both novelists and are su
posed to have studied human nature. They say
is full of inconsistencies and I daresay they are rig
I admit that, to me, the mentality of men like Latho
is perfectly incomprehensible, and I am ready to belie
anything.

. . . . . .

It was late when I left the Muntings, taking aw
with me the letters they gave me, and having obtain
from Munting a promise that he would draw up a stat
ment of the course of events during the periods n
covered by the letters, and containing, in particula
an exact account of what took place at " The Shack

is is the statement which forms part of this dossier, ided into chronological sections for greater ease of erence. I regret that it is so diffuse and adorned th so many unnecessary personal reflections and rary embellishments. It seems that the vanity of iters must be indulged at all costs, even where a aightforward summary of events would be far more eful. I have not, however, ventured to omit or alter ything, preferring to submit the documents exactly they stand.

My next step was to write to Sir James Lubbock ising the various points noted in the schedule for s consideration. In the course of a few days I received e following courteous reply.

HOME OFFICE
12 January, 1930

UL HARRISON, ESQ.

AR SIR,

I have your letter of inquiry with regard to the cumstances attending your late father's unfortunate ath. I quite understand that you are anxious to have e fullest information about it, and will do my best clear up the various points you raise.

You may rest fully assured that the death was in t due to the cause stated at the inquest, viz. : poison- g by muscarine, the poisonous principle of the fungus *anita muscaria*. In such a case I should not confine vself to searching for the particular poison suggested the circumstances, but should search, as a matter routine, for all the various classes of scheduled

poisons, including, not only the other vegetable alkali but also the metallic poisons. The analysis was mad with great care, and I can confidently state that ever possibility was eliminated, except that of poisoning b muscarine. This poison, which was present in ver considerable quantities, was unmistakably identified while the symptoms and post-mortem appearances, a reported by the witnesses, were indubitably consisten with this form of poisoning.

I may add that preparations of the viscera, vomit etc., and the unconsumed part of the dish of fung have been preserved untouched, as is my invariabl custom in such cases, so as to be available for futur reference or analysis in case of any further questio being raised. Humanly speaking, however, you ma rely absolutely on the accuracy of my results.

With regard to the composition of the dish, I fin on referring to my notes, that this consisted of fung exhibiting the structural features of *Amanita*, stewe whole in a preparation of beef broth, flavoured wit garlic and pot-vegetables.

Your further question displays a slight misappre hension. The isolation of muscarine itself in a pur state from the fungus would be a chemical experimen of considerable difficulty, and has, so far as I know been accomplished only by two men, Harnack an Nothnagel ; their results have not, I believe, receive confirmation as yet. Choline aurichloride and mus carine aurichloride have been obtained by Harnac from fractionation of extracts of the fungus, and, mor recently, King obtained muscarine chloride from th same source. But I conceive your question to mean simply, " Could a poisonous liquid be produced b simply boiling the fungus in water or broth ? " To this

answer is, Yes ; the liquid part of a stew made with *anita muscaria* would be equally poisonous with the id part. In fact, according to Dixon Mann, the solid rts of the fungus, when thoroughly desiccated, are rmless, and are eaten with impunity in certain parts the Continent, so that the juices when extracted by ullition would probably contain a greater propor- n of poisonous matter than the solid residue.

Trusting that these facts are what you require,

I remain,

Yours faithfully,

JAMES LUBBOCK

The ground being thus cleared for my investigations, determined to clear up the Manaton end of the thing st, Munting having meanwhile undertaken to make quiries as to Lathom's movements in London on the th and 18th of October.

"The Shack" had been locked up, and the key posited with the local constable. Being the executor der my father's will, I had no difficulty in obtaining and took the opportunity of asking a few questions the public-house. All I could gather was, however, at Mr. Lathom had knocked them up on the Saturday ght in a "terrible state" and "looking as though had seen a ghost," and had announced that Mr. arrison had been found dead. As he seemed on the int of collapse, the publican had comforted him with ong drink and had himself summoned the police from vey Tracey, the village constable being, as it hap- ned, absent on some duty or other. While waiting, r. Lathom had recovered himself and had asked to

make a trunk call to town. This was, of course, t
call to Margaret Harrison. The telephone is in t
landlord's private room, and the landlord had, wi
a proper delicacy, retired and shut the door on h
guest, so that nothing had been overheard. On comi
out, Lathom had seemed greatly agitated, and h
explained that he had been breaking the news to t
dead man's family. This was disappointing, as it wou
have been interesting to know in what words Latho
had announced the event. From Margaret Harriso
letter, however, it seems that he represented the thi
as an accident. Yet she must surely have had h
suspicions of a death occurring so opportunely and
pat upon her own instigations to murder. Possibly s
managed to convince even herself by her hypocrisy
Munting thinks it not unlikely, and no doubt he h
had experience of her type of mentality.

I next obtained the address of the labourer, Haro
Coffin. His wife was at home, and informed me th
I should find her husband at work carting some timb
which had fallen in the recent gale. If I followed t
lane leading down past "The Shack" I could n
miss him. Following these directions, I came upon hi
on the outskirts of a small wood. He was very read
to tell me all he knew, and led me at once to t
spot, not very far away, where he had last seen m
father.

It was, of course, too late in the season for *Amani
rubescens*, but the site which he pointed out seeme
suitable enough for it, and he also, without bein
prompted, mentioned that he had often seen fun
growing there, of a reddish-brown colour with gre
patches on the top. I took *Edible and Poisonous Fun*
from my pocket and asked him to look through i

hesitated some time between the pictures of *Amanita escens* and *Amanita muscaria*, and finally said he ought it might be one of those two. The colour of *anita muscaria* seemed a bit overdone, he thought, t then, pictures in books wasn't always right, was ey, sir ? The wood, locally known as Five-Acre Wood, s a great place for toadstools, and he had often seen father gathering the great *Hepatica* fungus from the es—the huge liver-coloured lumps commonly known " Poor Man's Beefsteak." Coffin was quite clear at my father was actually gathering fungi, and not erely looking for them. My father had spoken to him d said something about, " Getting my supper, you , Coffin. You ought to try some yourself ; you're ssing a treat." Coffin had often thought of those eerful words when he heard of the poor gentleman's ath, and had taken them as a warning.

Coffin said he knew Mr. Lathom quite well by sight, ving met him from time to time in the public-house nen having a friendly glass. He had never seen him the Five-Acre Wood but once, and that was with r. Harrison, about a week before the latter's death. s own work had lain in and about the Five-Acre ring the first fortnight of October—he was employed Mr. Carey—all this round here was Mr. Carey's nd—and he thought he should have seen Mr. Lathom he had come there alone at any time.

Having thanked and rewarded Coffin, I made my ay to " The Shack." Except for the removal of the ddclothes and other objects required for the inquest was exactly as it had been left at the time of the death. he broken bedstead, with its terrible witness to my or father's death-agony, still stood in a corner of e bedroom. Even Lathom's painting materials lay

huddled in a corner. I suppose he had forgotten t remove them. A few roughly-daubed canvases in o contrasted strongly with my father's delicate wate colours, of which I found a number put away in drawer. Dust had gathered thickly everywhere.

I made a careful search on shelves and in drawer for any notes or papers that might throw light on m problem, but found nothing except a few bills an the last letter my father had received from me. Ther were one or two novels, a number of local guide-book and botanical books of reference, and some artist' catalogues. Delving among these, I at length came o a large scale map of the district, with notes upon i in my father's handwriting. He had apparently use it as a kind of botanical chart, marking on it th localities in which various plants and fungi were t be found. Five-Acre Wood was clearly shown, an upon it my father had made a small cross accompanie by the note "*Amanita rubescens*." I looked for an mention of *Amanita muscaria*, but could see none either my father had not found it in the district, o else he had concerned himself with edible varietie only.

One question, therefore, seemed clearly answered My father *had*, without question, been gathering fung for his supper on the 17th October, and the plac where he had gathered them was a place in which h was accustomed to find *Amanita rubescens*.

I could find nothing further of any interest at "Th Shack," though I spent the whole day there. I passe the night at the inn, and the next day departed t Bovey Tracey to check Lathom's movements.

My first interview was with the taxi-driver. Thi man's name is William Johnson and he lives in th

igh Street. He perfectly recollects having driven to anaton on Thursday, 17th October, and taken athom to catch the 8.13. The circumstance had been rongly impressed upon his mind by the catastrophe at followed it so closely, and the fact that he had ctually visited "The Shack" and seen the victim, nly two days before the discovery of the body, has aturally made him a kind of local hero.

He is positive that my father and Lathom parted n the best of terms. They shook hands, and my father aid: "Well, hope you have a good journey. See you ack on Saturday. What train do you think you'll atch?" Lathom answered that he wasn't quite ure, and added: "Don't wait up for me if I'm ate."

This answers one of our questions, and makes quite clear that at least one person besides my ather knew that Lathom was expected back on the aturday.

My next question was, At what time had Lathom rdered his taxi? The man remembers this, too. A elephone message was put through to him from Manaton at about nine o'clock on the Wednesday vening. He can verify this, if necessary, by his order-ook.

This is interesting. It makes it seem likely that Lathom only decided to make this trip to town at he last moment—in fact, after hearing my father xpress his intention of gathering *Amanita rubescens* he following day.

Finally, I inquired whether Johnson had actually een Lathom get into the train. By a stroke of good ortune he was able to answer this question definitely. He had to put a parcel on the train for a printer at

Bovey Tracey, and, while doing this, he had se
Lathom take his seat in a third-class smoker. As t
train went out, Lathom leaned out of the window a
shouted something to a porter—some question,
thought, about changing at Newton Abbot.

I hired this man's taxi, which was a reasonably go
one, and interviewed the railway staff at the three int
mediate stations between Bovey Tracey and Newt
Abbot. Here, as was natural, the men found some dif
culty in remembering the events of three months ag
I could not find anybody who recollected seei
Lathom. In each place I asked for the name of an
body in the village who might be likely to have a c
or motor-cycle for hire, and went to see the proprieto
of the vehicles, but without result. Nowhere could
find any record of such a transaction.

Newton Abbot is a larger place, and I anticipat
difficulty. On the contrary, and greatly to my surpri
I got on to Lathom's trail almost immediately. N
sooner had I mentioned his name to the station-mast
than he said at once :

" Oh, yes, sir—that was the gentleman who lost
pocket-book last October. Did he ever find it ? "

Taking this cue as it presented itself, I replied th
he had not, and that, being in the neighbourhoo
I had promised to call and ask about it.

" Well, sir," said the station-master, " we ma
inquiries all down the line, and had several men o
searching, but they never found it. They would ha
brought it to me if they had, for they were all dece
fellows and Mr. Lathom offered a reward. I'm afra
some tramp must have picked it up, sir. There's
lot of them about these days and they're not ov
honest."

"No doubt that was it," said I. "Let me see—whereabouts did he say he lost it?"

"Said he thought it must have fallen out of his breast-pocket when he was leaning out of the window. He couldn't say exactly where, but he thought it must be just the other side of Heathfield. Here's the note I made in my book, you see, sir, and here's the gentleman's name and address that he wrote down himself."

I recognised the handwriting in which Lathom had written out Munting's address for me.

"Well, it was very tiresome," I said, "but I am sure you did all you could. There was money in the pocket-book, I suppose?"

"Yes, sir, and the gentleman's ticket to town. He was in quite a way about it, because he said he hadn't enough money on him to book again. So I spoke to the ticket-collector, and he said he would make it all right on the train, and Mr. Lathom could settle it with the Company when he got to town."

These inquiries had taken the greater part of the day, so I decided to stay that night in Newton Abbot and interview the ticket-collector the next day. He was still on the same train and perfectly recollected the affair of Lathom and his ticket. I went on up to Paddington with him, and there the friendly collector directed me to the official in the Enquiry Bureau who had dealt with the matter on the previous occasion. After considerable referring back and forth and ringing up the head office, it was clearly established that Lathom had duly arrived by the 1.15, without his ticket, had explained the circumstances and had left his name and address, promising to send the ticket on if it turned up. As a matter of fact, it never had turned

up, but, as the booking-clerk at Bovey Tracey had clearly remembered issuing it and had identified Lathom on his next visit as being the person to whom the ticket had been issued, the Company had accepted the explanation and allowed the matter to drop.

This was something of a blow. I had really reckoned more than I realised on finding that Lathom had left the train at some point and doubled back to Manaton. There was just one possibility. He might have hurried across to the down platform and taken the 1.30, which would land him back at Bovey Tracey at about half past six. This would have meant very quick work, for the explanation to the authorities at Paddington must have taken him nearly ten minutes. And at the other end he would have had to get, somehow or other, to Manaton and then do the three miles out to "The Shack," and then snatch his opportunity to rush in unseen, and drop the poison into the stew while my father's back was turned. It seemed almost impossible. Apart from everything else, it was inconceivable that he should not have been seen, either at Newton Abbot or at Bovey Tracey. He would have had to pass the barrier, and he would have had to hire a car, for nothing else would have got him down to "The Shack" before supper-time.

I turned it over and over in my mind and could make nothing of it. It seemed that I must abandon this whole theory. I returned to my hotel in a mood of deep depression, and found there, waiting for me, a letter from Munting, which I append here in its place

50. *John Munting to Paul Harrison*

DEAR HARRISON,

A damnably awkward thing has happened. Lathom turned up here last night. The girl showed him straight into my study and I was caught without hope of escape.

He looked nervous and irritable, and came straight to the point.

"Look here," he said, "has this fellow Harrison been round to see you?" I hesitated, and he went on at once, "Can't you say yes or no? What's the good of lying about it?"

"Yes," I said, "he came round."

"What did he want?"

I said you were naturally anxious to have all available details about your father's death.

"Yes, that's all very well," he cut in, angrily. "What have you been saying to him? Have you been discussing my private affairs?"

"I don't think," I answered cautiously, "I told him anything that he didn't know already."

"Have you been spreading scandals about Mrs. Harrison and me? Come on, out with it!"

"Sit down," I said, "it's no good shouting at me like that."

"Sit down be damned! I suppose you've been chattering as usual. I should have thought you would have the decency to shut up about what wasn't your business. I warned you about him, didn't I? Why couldn't you keep the fellow out?"

"My dear man," I said, "if I'd refused to see him, he'd have thought there was something very suspicious about the business."

"So I suppose you blabbed it all out like a good virtuous little boy."

"As a matter of fact," I said, "he seemed to know all about it."

"Nonsense! How could he know, unless you told him?"

"Possibly," I said, "he gathered it from your manner, or from Mrs. Harrison. Besides," I added, feeling that attack was my only possible form of defence, "I thought you told me it was all over and done with. Isn't it? I assured Harrison that it was. I had only your word to go on. If it wasn't all over, what the devil did you mean by taking me down to Devon with you? You know perfectly well that if I'd known it was still going on, wild horses wouldn't have taken me down there."

This brought him up all standing.

"Yes, well," he said, "of course it's all over. But why did you have to tell him anything about it at all?"

"Look here," I said, "you've not been straight with me, and I don't believe you now. I've had quite enough of this. You've dragged me into this business again. I've been your scapegoat once and I'm fed up. Do you expect me to go on taking the blame for your idiotic love-affairs? I've got my wife to consider."

I was afraid he would go back to the very difficult question of how you got to know about the intrigue. I didn't want to tell him about the letters, which you had shown me more or less in confidence, and yet I felt a perfect cad for not warning him of his danger. It seemed abominable to have listened to such suspicions against a man, without giving him the chance to clear himself. Fortunately, he abandoned this point.

"What does the fellow want?" he went on. "What's

think he's going to find out? The thing's clear ough, isn't it?"

"Well," I said, "to tell you the truth, Lathom, hen I came to consider the thing I couldn't help specting——"

"Suspecting! My God, *you've* got your beastly spicions now. What in the devil's name do *you* spect?"

"I couldn't help suspecting," I went on, as steadily I could, "that old Harrison had found out some- ing and committed suicide."

"Oh!" said Lathom. "Well, what if he did? The an was a ——" (a word which I will spare you). The best thing he could do was to clear out from a lace where he wasn't wanted. Damn good riddance. good thing if he did have the sense to see it."

"That's a pretty rotten thing to say, Lathom."

"Don't be such a damned hypocrite."

"I mean it," I said. "You're behaving like an bsolute swine. Harrison was damned decent to you, nd you seem to think that just because you can paint etter than he could, you are perfectly justified in educing his wife and then accepting his hospitality nd driving him to commit suicide."

"I hadn't anything to do with it," he retorted, "he as all right when I left him. You ask anybody down ere who saw him. He was as cheery and friendly as ould be. I'm not responsible for what he did behind ny back. I was in London all the time. I can prove ."

"I don't see that it needs proving," said I.

"Oh don't you?" he burst out violently. "Well, do. You'll be saying next that I had something to o with his death."

He stopped suddenly and I caught him looking sideways at me, as if to see how I should take this suggestion. It turned me quite cold, and I had a curious sensation as if my stomach had turned right over.

"Well," I said, "if anybody heard you talking like this, they might be excused for thinking so."

"Oh, might they!"

"It's dangerous to talk about wanting people out of the way, you know," I went on, watching him.

"Punk!" he said. "Now, I'll tell you, Mr. Good Little Moral Boy, I'll tell you just exactly where I was all the time—all the time, do you hear? And then you can come and beg my pardon."

"I don't want——" I began.

"No, but I do. Got that? I do. And you may as well make a note of it. On Thursday, now—Thursday—have you got that?—I was at the dentist's at two o'clock, see? First thing I did when I got to town. You can verify that, I suppose? Or do you imagine I have bribed the dentist? You'd better write his address down. Get on with it."

"Really, Lathom——"

"No, you won't. Any excuse not to believe me, I suppose. Well, I'll do it for you. Dentist, two o'clock, name and address, here you are. Seven o'clock—you'll allow that I couldn't get to Devon and back between two-thirty and seven, I suppose—or do you imagine I chartered an aeroplane?"

"I suppose nothing of the sort."

"Damn it, suppose what you like. I can give you what I was doing at four o'clock. Come now, that's close enough, isn't it? I had tea with Marlowe. He's a painter, but even you will allow he's honest enough. Tea with Marlowe, four o'clock. At seven, I dined

: the 'Bon Bourgeois,' and paid by cheque—you ın confirm that, you know—and went on to the ɾst night of Meyrick's show. He saw me there. Is ıat good enough?"

He was writing all these times and places down, ıgging the pencil savagely into the paper. I said:

"You seem to remember it all very clearly."

"Yes, that's one in the eye for you, isn't it, my d? Sorry and all that, but you asked for it. I slept ıat night at the studio. I'm afraid I've only Mrs. utts' word for it, and, of course, she'd say anything."

"Very likely," said I.

"That gives you a gleam of hope, doesn't it? But ɛing I didn't get home till four ack emma, after elebrating with Meyrick's crowd—ask them—it doesn't ave much margin, does it? Particularly as I was up gain at nine o'clock."

"That's very unusual," I said, trying to speak ghtly. "Whatever did you get up at nine for?"

"To spite you. And incidentally, to sign for a eastly registered letter. Providential, wasn't it?"

"Obviously," said I.

"At ten-thirty I went to see my agent. You know im, don't you?"

I admitted knowing the agent.

"I lunched at Lady Tottenham's. Went to see her bout a sitting at twelve and stayed on. Anything shy about Lady Tottenham?"

"Nothing, except her husband's income. Sardines, n't it?"

"Damned witty. You ought to put that in your ext book. Then I went round to Winsor & Newton's nd paid a bill. By cheque. And ordered some stuff. Jo doubt they will be happy to show you their books."

I was silent.

" Dinner at Holtby's. Very stately and all that Old boy thinks of presenting a portrait to Liverpoo Town Hall. Most respectable party. Went on to the Aitchbone—not so respectable, but full of people Spent the night with the Goodman boys. Breakfasted there. Came on. Looked you up, and you had me under your own bloody inquisitive eye for the rest of the day. Now then ! "

I asked him why he was so anxious to tell me all this.

" To tell your pal Harrison," he snapped back " He seems blasted anxious to stick his nose into my concerns. Tell him to keep out of it. I don't like the swine."

" I don't see," I said, " why you should work yourself up into this extraordinary state of mind because a man has made a few ordinary inquiries about his father. Unless, of course, you have anything special to hide."

This seemed to sober him down. He pulled his face into something more nearly resembling amiability and then suddenly began to laugh.

" I'm sorry. I lost my temper rather. Anything to hide ? Good God, no—except that I'm sorry Harrison has got on to—that business with Margaret, you know She must have let something out, accidentally. But I'll swear the old man never knew a word about it Not a damn thing. He was as right as rain—best of pals, and all that. But I don't like that pup of his.'

I put down the pen with which I had been fidgeting all this time, got up and went and stood by him on the hearthrug.

" Lathom," I said, " why did you come here ? "

He looked at me, and for a moment I thought he was on the point of getting something off his chest. I had a horrible fear of what it might be. If he had spoken, I really do not know what I should have said or done. I might—I don't know. I was really quite horribly frightened.

But nothing came of it. He shifted his gaze and said, in a curious, embarrassed way:

"I've told you. I wanted to know what you'd done with Harrison—to find out how the matter stood. Afraid it's been awkward for you. I didn't quite realise. It can't be helped. He'd have to know sometime, anyhow. I'd better be going."

He held out his hand. In the state things were in, I could not take it. Either I was being a perfect Judas Iscariot, in which case I hadn't the face to give him my hand, or else *he* was, in which case I felt I would rather be excused. It was all so involved that at the moment I was completely incapable of deciding anything.

"Oh!" he said. "I've said one or two things, haven't I? All right. Sulk about it if you like. I'm damned if I care."

He slammed out. After a moment I went after him. "Lathom!" I called.

I don't know what I meant to say to him. The only answer was the bang of the outer door.

Honestly, Harrison, I don't know what to make of it. I don't know whether I've been a skunk or a moral citizen. I don't know whether I've warned a guilty man, or betrayed an innocent one, or the other way round. But I'm feeling like hell about it, because—well, frankly, because I cannot believe that an innocent man would have such a water-tight alibi.

It's perfectly obvious he came here to ram t
alibi down my throat. But it *is* an alibi. I'm enclosi
the paper with the names and addresses he wro
down so pat. You can investigate it all, if you lik
but it's certain to be sound. He knew it. He was pe
fectly confident. Besides——

Anyway, I won't touch it. It makes me sick.

I've finished that statement, by the way. Here
is. I hope to God the whole thing comes to nothi
and I never hear of it again. I ask you, as a favou
to leave me out of it if you can.

Yours very truly,
J. Muntin

51. Statement of Paul Harrison [Continued.]

Disregarding the hysterical tone of his last fe
sentences, I felt that on the whole Munting was righ
and had behaved with more discretion and publ
spirit than I had credited him with.

It was obvious to me that Lathom was losing h
nerve. As to his guilt, I had by now no shadow
a doubt. The blatant way in which he had mark
his trail, right up from Manaton to London and ba
again, and his determination to let Munting kno
all about it, were actions entirely inconsistent wi
the carelessness of an innocent man. The troub
was that he was now on the alert. At any minu
he might take alarm and bolt. On this account,
decided to waste no valuable time in checking h
alibi. The fact that he had produced it with suc

nfidence left me no hope of breaking it down ; more-
er, some of the inquiries were of a sort that could
ly be made satisfactorily by the police.

It was evident that I must abandon the whole idea
a return to Manaton. Only one possibility was
ft, namely, that the poison had been left in such a
ace that my father was bound to add it to the dish
fungi himself ; and that this manœuvre had been
rried out before Lathom left for London.

I knew that all the foodstuffs in " The Shack " had
en carefully analysed and found harmless, with the
ception of the half-eaten dish of fungi itself. I was,
erefore, forced to conclude that the poison had
en added to the beef stock in which the fungi were
ewed. Anything else would be dangerous, for the
esence of muscarine in, say, the salt or the coffee
ould be a circumstance so suspicious as to impress
en the coroner's jury.

There was nothing difficult about this. The stock
ould have been prepared from Monday's delivery
shin of beef. It was my father's habit always to
ep a pan of stock simmering on the hob. By Thurs-
ay morning there would probably be just sufficient
ft to cook his evening meal, after which he would
il up the new supply of shin for the rest of the
eek.

Now, in what form would the poison have been
dded ? Not in the solid form, for my father would
ave noticed the presence of fungi in his stock. But
teacupful of poisonous liquid might easily have
en poured in at any moment. I was, therefore,
rought back to my previous idea that Lathom had
anaged to procure the *Amanita muscaria* and decoct
e poison during my father's absence from the hut.

But how I was ever to prove this, I did not kno
I had plenty of evidence of motive and opportunit
but nothing that could put the crime beyond a
reasonable doubt in the minds of twelve good a
true jury-members. And besides, I was by no mea
satisfied of Lathom's ability to identify *Amanita muscar*
with certainty. Was there no easier and more reliab
method by which he might have obtained the stuff
Was it possible, for instance, to buy muscarine
If so, and if one could trace the sale to Lathom, the
would be genuine evidence of criminal intent. F
what innocent reason could an artist requi
muscarine?

The difficulties of the thing stared me in the fac
Even if muscarine was procurable commercially (whic
I thought very unlikely, for, so far as I know, it h
no medicinal use), it was impossible for me, as a priva
individual, to broadcast an investigation among a
the chemists in the country. Only the police cou
do that, and I could not set the police to work witho
producing the very evidence which was the object
the search. There were not only chemists—there we
all the research laboratories too. The thing seeme
hopeless.

At this point the word "laboratories" struck
chord in my mind. Had not there been somethin
in the Munting correspondence about a laboratory?

I had not paid much attention to the passage whe
I first read it, because my mind had been taken u
with the idea of Lathom's having gathered the fungu
on the spot. And, indeed, the facts had been so buri
in a lot of vague twaddle about the origin of life an
other futile Muntingesque speculations that I ha
skimmed the pages over in disgust, but when I turne

back to the letter I cursed myself for not having given it fuller consideration before.

Two facts emerged very clearly from the welter of surrounding nonsense :

1. That Lathom had been shown a collection of poisons, apparently kept where anybody could easily get at them ; and

2. That Leader had drawn the special attention of the party to certain synthetic, or laboratory-made poisons, indistinguishable by analysis from natural vegetable products.

Here at last was something definite. Supposing that a bottle of muscarine had by any chance formed part of the collection, what was easier than for Lathom to have helped himself to it ?

I did not know whether it was possible for an outside person to penetrate the laboratories of St. Anthony's College unchallenged, but this I could easily find out by the simple process of going there. Probably I should only have to ask to see some doctor or student. Lathom, for instance, could have asked to see this man Leader, whom he already knew. Leader might very well be able to give us some help in the matter. Munting was my point of contact with Leader, and the next step was obviously to go round and get a note of introduction.

Munting, of course, showed great unwillingness to interfere in the matter. His interview with Lathom seemed to have upset him badly. At length, however, I persuaded him that he had a duty in the matter.

" If you refuse to help me," I said, " and I am able

to prove the murder, you will be something very li
an accessory after the fact."

Mrs. Munting, who, in practical common sense,
worth ten of her husband, agreed with this point
view.

"It would be very unpleasant if you got into troub
about it, Jack. I do think, if Mr. Lathom really h
done this dreadful thing, you oughtn't to stand in t
way of getting it found out. A man like that is ve
dangerous. And they say that when a poisoner h
once committed a murder and got away with it, he
very likely to try it again. It might be you or you
Mr. Harrison next time."

"Do you really think so?" he muttered, unhappil

"I do. And oh, Jack! Do think of the awful cruel
of letting that poor man die such a painful, lingeri
death, all alone in that place, without a soul to con
near him. Anyone who could do that would be
absolute monster. I don't care what excuse he had

"That's been haunting me," said Munting—and
did look very white and ill. "All right, Harrison. I
see it through. Look here, I'll come along to the pla
with you."

We walked in complete silence till we came to S
Anthony's. There were numbers of people passing
and out through the wide entrance, and nobody too
the slightest notice of us.

"I think the labs. are up this staircase," said Muntin
leading the way. "And here's where we hang up t
hats and coats," he added, rattling his umbrella in
a hat-stand, placed inside the heavy swinging door.

"Is that usual?" I inquired.

"We did it last time," said Munting, "I rememb
it distinctly. And as the idea is to see whether it

asible to roam unchallenged about the place, we ay as well look as much like the inhabitants as poss-le. If Lathom did come here poison-hunting, he'd arcely have omitted that precaution."

Having thus shed the outward insignia of visitors, e found ourselves in a wide corridor, smelling faintly chemists' shops, with numbered doors on either side. few men in white overalls passed us, but took no otice of us. We walked briskly, as though with a efinite objective, and, selecting at random a door near ie end of the corridor, pushed it boldly open.

A big room, full of sinks and tables and well-lit by rge windows, presented itself to our view. A student t at a bench near us, with his back to the door. Ie was boiling something in a complicated apparatus glass tubes over a bunsen Burner. He did not look p. Over by the window, four men were gathered ound some sort of experiment, which apparently bsorbed all their attention. A sixth man, mounted on pair of steps, was searching for something in a cup-oard. He glanced round as we entered, but, seeing iat we did not look likely to assist him in finding hat he wanted, ignored us, and, coming down, went p to the student with the apparatus.

"What's become of the . . . ?" (something I didn't atch) he asked irritably.

"How should I know?" demanded the other, who as pouring some liquid into a funnel and seemed nnoyed at the interruption. "Ask Griggs."

We backed out again, unregarded, and tried another oor. Here we found a small room, with a solitary, lderly man bending over a microscope. He removed is eye from the lens and looked round with a scowl. Ve begged his pardon and retired. Before we had

closed the door, his head was back at the eye-piec again, while his right hand, which had never stoppe writing, continued to take notes.

We intruded, with equal ease and equally unchal lenged, into a lecture-room, where forty or fift students were gathered round a demonstrator at blackboard; into two more laboratories, one empty an the other containing two absorbed men and a dea rabbit, and finally into yet a fourth laboratory, whe a dozen or so students were laughing and talking an seemed to be waiting for somebody.

One of these, having nothing particular to do, cam forward and asked if we wanted anybody in particula Munting replied that he was looking for Mr. Leade

"Leader?" said the student. "Let me see. He's second-year man, isn't he? Where's Leader, anybod know?"

A young man in spectacles said he fancied Leader wa in Room 27.

"Oh, yes, to be sure. Try 27—along the corrido on the right, up the steps and the second door on th left. If he's not there, I expect they'll be able to te you. Not at all, pleasure."

We found our way to Room 27, and there, amon a group of students, found Leader, who greete Munting with loud demonstrations of joy. I was intro duced, and explained that I was anxious for a littl information, if he could spare the time.

He led us to a quiet corner, and Munting remindec him of his previous visit with Lathom and the con versation about synthetic poisons. He was only to delighted to assist us, and led us along at once to anothe room, inhabited only by the usual couple of absorbe men in a far corner, who took no notice of us.

"Here you are," said Leader, cheerfully, displaying n open cupboard, stacked with glass bottles. "Con-incing demonstration of the way we've got Mother Iature beat. Synthetic thyroxine—some stuff you roduce in your own throat, handy and available ithout the tedious formality of opening you up. A nall daily dose gives you pep. Camphor, our own rand, cures cold and kills beetles. Take a sniff and dmire the fine, rich, natural aroma. Cinchona, all ıy own work, or, strictly speaking, Professor Benton's. Adrenalin—that's the stuff to make your hair stand n end ; full of kidney punch. Muscarine—not so pretty s scarlet toadstools, but just as good for giving you ummy-ache. Urea——"

"That's very interesting, isn't it?" said Munting.

"Very," said I. My hand shook a little as I ook the bottle from Leader. It was a squat, wide-nouthed glass jar, about half-full of a whitish owder, and clearly labelled "Muscarine (Synthetic) $C_5H_{15}NO_3$."

"It's rather deadly, I suppose," I added, with as nuch carelessness as I could assume.

"Fairly so," said Leader. "Not quite as powerful s the natural stuff, I believe, but quite disagreeable nough. A teaspoonful would settle your hash all right, nd leave a bit over for the dog. Nice symptoms. Sickness, blindness, delirium *and* convulsions." He rinned fondly at the bottle. "Like to try some? Take t in a little water and the income-tax won't bother you gain."

"What's it made of, Leader?" asked Munting.

"Oh—inorganic stuff, you know—all artificial. I ouldn't say off-hand. I can look it up if you like." He hunted in a locker and produced a note-book.

"Oh, yes, of course. Cholin. You start with artifici cholin."

"What's that? Something to do with the liver?

"Well, yes, in the ordinary way. But you can mak it by heating ethene oxide with triethylamine. Tha gives you your cholin. Then you oxidise it with dilu nitric acid—the stuff you etch with, you know. Resul muscarine. Pretty, isn't it?"

"And if you analyse it again chemically, coul you tell the difference between that and the re stuff?"

"Of course not. It *is* the real stuff. I don't thin we've got any of the natural muscarine about the plac or you'd see. But there's no difference at all, reall Nature's only a rather clumsy kind of chemist, don you see. You're a chemical laboratory; your body, mean—so am I—so's everybody—only rather a carele and inaccurate one, and given to producing unnece sary flourishes and ornaments, like your face, or toa stools. There's no *need* to make a toadstool when yo want to produce muscarine. If it comes to that, I don suppose there's any real need for your face—from chemical point of view. We could build you up quit easily in the labs. if we wanted to. You're mostly wate you know, with a little salt and phosphates and all tha kind of thing."

"Come, Leader, that won't quite do. You couldn make me walk and talk, could you?" (This was Mun ing, of course.)

"Well, no. There's a trifling hitch there, I adm —always supposing anybody wants to hear your brigh conversation."

"Then there is something—what I call Life—whic you can't imitate."

"Well, yes. But I daresay we shall find it some ay. It can't be anything very out-of-the-way, can it? mean, there's an awful lot of it knocking about. The ouble is, one doesn't seem to be able to find it by emical analysis. If one could, you know, it would robably turn out to be something quite ordinary, nd then one could make it."

"The lost formula of *Rossum's Universal Robots*, eh?"

"Very likely," said Leader, "that's a play, isn't it? never go to high-brow plays. All rot, you know—ore in your line. But there it is. Analyse you and ou're just so much dead matter. Analyse toadstools, nd you get this muscarine stuff. Makes one think a it less of the marvels of Nature, don't it?"

"Except," said Munting, who had by now mounted n his usual hobby-horse, "except for the small acci-ent of Life, which is, as you say, a triviality, no doubt, ut yet——"

I interrupted him.

"We don't want to waste Mr. Leader's time with etaphysics."

"No," said Munting, obstinately, "but what I want o know——"

A tremendous clattering of feet in the corridor eralded the throwing open of the door and the irrup-on of a large number of young men in overalls.

"Oh, Lord," said Leader, "we'll have to clear out." Ie looked at his watch. "I say, do you mind if I arge off? There's a demonstration I've simply got o attend. Nuisance, but I'm rather behindhand with Dimmock's subjects. Must mug it up somehow. wfully pleased to have seen you. Can you find your ay out?"

"Just a moment," said Munting. "You remember the

fellow I brought with me last year—Lathom—the artist?

"Yes, of course—the fellow who was so keen o poisons. Asked such a lot of questions about the rig dose, and was so struck with our synthetic stuff. Didn seem able to get over the fact that you couldn't di tinguish artificial muscarine from the natural produ by chemical analysis. Very intelligent bloke I thoug he was—for an artist. I remember him perfectly. Why?

"Have you seen anything of him since?"

"No. Why?"

"I just wondered. He said something once abo looking you up."

"Well, he didn't. Perhaps he came in the vac. There nobody here then, except the swots and the dunc trying to cram themselves for the exams. Tell him come in term-time. I really must buzz along. I sa come and feed one night, won't you?"

Munting promised to do so, and Leader escape cannoning violently into the demonstrator as h dashed out. We followed, not wishing to be caug and interrogated.

"That was Benton," said Munting, looking back the closing door. "I wish we could have had a wor with him. If Leader——"

"About the origin of life, I suppose? You're cracke about the origin of life. It's the origin of death we' investigating. We've got what we came for. It's cle enough that anybody might have walked in and helpe himself to a dose of that stuff. Look at those places w went into. No one to stop us—and it's term-time, to In the vac. the place is absolutely deserted. If Lathor was over here in the vac.—and he was. Don't yo remember those letters of Margaret Harrison's? H was here in July."

"Yes," agreed Munting, thoughtfully. "Yes, I quite ee that. But the difficulty is to *prove* it. Just because 's so easy to get in, it's a million to one against anyody having noticed you. And you can't expect a jury o accept a vague possibility like that. If there was any nalysable difference between natural and synthetic nuscarine, then, of course, you would have something enuine to go upon. Because it would be quite impossible to eat synthetic muscarine by accident—except in laboratory. But apparently there is no difference."

This sobered me. I had been feeling that we were vell on the way to solve the problem. But now I saw very clearly that we were just as far away as ever. No ury in the world would accept this involved and unubstantiated theory. True, people are ready enough o believe that an adulterer is very likely a murderer is well. But if it comes to the question of probability, which will they rather believe? That a man elaborately tole a rare and incomprehensible laboratory product which none of them have ever heard of, and elaborately administered it under involved and peculiar circumtances? Or that an eccentric experimenter with 'unnatural" foods accidentally poisoned himself with toadstools? The answer is obvious.

Moreover, to obtain a conviction, there must be no doubt possible. The murder theory must be overwhelmingly *more* likely than the accident theory. Judges are careful to point this out.

I was as certain that Lathom had poisoned my father with synthetic muscarine as that I was alive. But I began to be equally certain that Lathom had hit upon a method of murder that was utterly and completely proof against proof.

52. Statement of John Munting

[Additional and concluding portion.]

This damned business of Lathom's.

People write books about murders, and the ni young men and women in them enjoy the job detecting. It is a good game and I like reading th books. But the emotions of the nice young people a so well-regulated, or so perfunctory, or somethin They don't feel like worms and get put off their dinne when they have succeeded in squeezing a damagin admission out of a friend. They don't seem to suff from fits of retching terror for fear they should fin out something definite. Nor, while struggling wi these complicated miseries, do they ever have to ful contracts with publishers. Sometimes they are fille with a stern sorrow—a nice, Brutus-like sentiment. envy their nerves.

My nerves went back on me about the time of ou visit to St. Anthony's. I took a kind of hysterical ple sure in pointing out that we had no proof of th murder. I didn't want proof. I didn't want to know It was like writing one of those horrible letters whic call for a decisive answer one way or another. Yo post it and wait, and you know that one morning yo will see your correspondent's handwriting on an en velope, and feel as hollow as a piece of bamboo. An you wait. Nothing comes. And after a time you say " It's been lost in the post. Now I need not know. No now, at any rate. I can still pretend that it's all righ Nothing will happen to-day. I can eat my dinner an listen to the wireless—and perhaps it will go on lik that for ever."

The answer to the Lathom problem seemed to hav

een lost in the post. We did not talk about it at home. y wife knew that I winced from it. It made other bjects impossible, too. Women, for instance, and the ay they influence their lovers—we would start as far f as Gordon Craig's theatre-masks or *Gryll Grange* and ord Curryfin's *echeia*, and before we had gone far, the gure of Clytemnestra would come bobbing over the prizon, and I would be talking hurriedly, dismissing rushing into technicalities about epode and stasi- en, or about the chorus or the machines—anything. r if Elizabeth merely asked what we should have for nner, it seemed difficult to think of anything that was ot flavoured with mushrooms or founded on beef- ock. We lived for a whole week on fish once, so sensi- ve did our minds become.

I got over it, more or less, after a time and, merci- lly, Lathom let me alone. It was not till March that faint reminding echo of the thing sounded faintly ver the breakfast-table. I got a note from Mr. Perry, e parson to whom I had once lent a volume of ddington. At the sight of his name I got a kind of ainful twitching in the sore place.

The note was to invite me to dinner. An old col- ge friend of his, the extremely celebrated Professor oskyns, was coming over to spend the evening with m. Hoskyns is, of course, a very brilliant physicist, nd Perry thought it would interest me to meet him. ne or two other people were coming as well. If I uld put up with a very simple meal, he thought we ould enjoy a really enjoyable talk.

My first instinct was to refuse. I hated the idea of ing into the district and of seeing anybody even motely connected with the Harrisons. But the idea meeting Hoskyns was fascinating. I have that kind

of vaguely inquiring mind that likes to be told what going on, even though I could not be troubled to ma a single experiment myself, and should not have t vaguest idea what experiment to make. A pap-fe negative, twentieth-century mind, open on all sid and wind-swept by every passing gust. Elizabe thought that a chat with a bunch of scientific m would do me good. We need not, she said, menti the Harrisons. In the end, I accepted, and I rath think Elizabeth must have conveyed some sort of war ing to Perry, for the Harrisons were not mentioned.

Perry's shabby little sitting-room seemed crowd with men and smoke when I arrived. Professor Ho kyns, long, thin, bald, and much more human-looki than his Press photographs, was installed in a broke springed leather arm-chair and called Perry "Jim There was also a swarthy little man in spectacl whom they both called "Stingo," and who turn out to be Professor Matthews, the biologist, the m who has done so much work on heredity. A larg stout, red-faced person with a boisterous manner w introduced as Waters. He was younger than the re but they all treated him with deference, and it pr ently appeared that he was the coming man in chem try. Desultory conversation made it clear that Ma thews, Hoskyns and Perry had been contemporaries Oxford, and that Waters had been brought by Ma thews, with whom he was on terms of the hearti friendship and disagreement. A thin youth, with eager manner and an irrepressible forelock, complet the party. He sported a clerical collar and inform me that he was the new curate, and that it was ' wonderful opportunity" to start his ministry und a man like Mr. Perry.

The dinner was satisfying. A vast beef-steak pud-
ing, an apple-pie of corresponding size, and tankards
f beer, quaffed from Perry's old rowing-cups, put us
ll into a mellow humour. Perry's asceticism did not,
am thankful to say, take the form of tough hash and
monade, in spite of the presence on his walls of
series of melancholy Arundel prints, portraying
rown and skinny anchorites, apparently nourished
n cabbage-water. It rather tended to the idea of:
Beef, noise, the Church, vulgarity and beer," and
judged that in their younger days, my fellow-guests
ad kept the progs busy. However, the somewhat weari-
me flood of undergraduate reminiscence was stemmed
fter a time, with suitable apologies, and Matthews
aid, a little provocatively:

"So here we all are. I never thought you'd stick to
, Perry. Which has made your job hardest—the War
r people like us?"

"The War," said Perry, immediately. "It has taken
he heart out of people."

"Yes. It showed things up a bit," said Matthews.
Made it hard to believe in anything."

"No," replied the priest. "Made it easy to believe
nd difficult not to believe—in anything. Just anything.
hey believe in everything in a languid sort of way—
n you, in me, in Waters, in Hoskyns, in mascots, in
piritualism, in education, in the daily papers—why
ot? It's easier, and the various things cancel out and
o make it unnecessary to take any definite steps in
ny direction."

"Damn the daily papers," said Hoskyns. "And
amn education. All these get-clever-quick articles
nd sixpenny text-books. Before one has time to verify
n experiment, they're all at you, shrieking to have it

formulated into a theory. And if you do formulate i they misunderstand it, or misapply it. If anybody say there are vitamins in tomatoes, they rush out with tomato-theory. If somebody says that gamma-rays ar found to have an action on cancer-cells in mice, the proclaim gamma-rays as a cure-all for everything fron old age to a cold in the head. And if anybody goe quietly away into a corner to experiment with high voltage electric currents, they start a lot of ill-informe rubbish about splitting the atom."

"Yes," said Matthews, "I thought I saw som odd remarks attributed to you the other day abou that."

"Wasting my time," said Hoskyns. "I told then exactly what they put into my mouth. You're right Jim, they'd believe anything. The elixir of life—that' what they really want to get hold of. It would loo well in a headline. If you can't give 'em a simple for mula to cure all human ills and explain creation, the say you don't know your business."

"Ah!" said Perry, with a twinkle of the eye, "bu if the Church gives them a set of formulæ for the sam purpose, they say they don't want formulæ or dogmas but just a loving wistfulness."

"You're not up-to-date enough," said Waters "They like their formulæ to be red-hot, up-to-the minute discoveries."

"Why, so they are," said Perry. "Look at Stinge here. He tells them that if two unfit people marry, thei unfitness will be visited on their children unto the third and fourth generation, after which they will probably die out through mere degeneration. We've been telling them that for three or four thousand years, and Mat thews has only just caught up to us. As a matter o

ct, you people are on our side. If *you* tell them the ings, they may perhaps come to believe in them."

"And possibly act on them, you think?" said Iatthews. "But we have to do all the work for them, st as you have to do the godly living."

"That's not altogether true," said Perry.

"Near enough. But we do get on a bit faster, be- ıuse we can give reasons for things. Show me a germ, ıd I'll tell you how to get rid of plague or cholera. all it Heaven's judgment for sin, and all you can do to sit down under it."

"But surely," struck in the curate, "we are expressly arned in Scripture against calling things judgments r sin. How about those eight on whom the Tower Siloam fell?"

"If it was anybody's sin," said Perry, "it was robably the carelessness of the people who built the ower."

"And that's usually a sin that finds somebody out," dded Waters. "Unfortunately, the sinner isn't always ıe victim."

"Why should it be?" said Matthews. "Nature does ot work by a scheme of poetical justice."

"Nor does God," said Perry. "We suffer for one nother, as, indeed, we must, being all members one f another. Can you separate the child from the father, ıe man from the brute, or even the man from the egetable cell, Stingo?"

"No," said Matthews. "It is you that have tried o keep up that story about Man in the image of God nd lord of nature and so on. But trace the chain ack and you will find every link hold—you yourself, ompounded from your father and mother by the ıechanical chemistry of the chromosomes. Back to

your ancestors, back to prehistoric Neanderthal Ma and his cousin, Aurignacian. Neanderthal was mistake, he wouldn't work properly and died out, bu the line goes on back, dropping the misfits, leaving th stabilised forms on the way—back to Arboreal Man, t the common ancestor Tarsius, to the first Mammal, t the ancestral bird-form, back to the Reptiles, th Trilobites, back to the queer shapeless jellies of li that divide and subdivide eternally in the sea-water The things that found some kind of balance with the environment persisted, the things that didn't, died out and here and there some freak found its freakishness advantage and started a new kind of life with a ne equilibrium. At what point, Perry, will you place you image of God ? "

" Well," said Perry, " I should not attempt to den that Adam was formed of the dust of the earth. An your ape-and-tiger ancestry at least provides me wit a scientific authority for original sin. What a merc the Church stuck to that dogma, in spite of Roussea and the noble savage. If she hadn't, you scientis would have forced it back on her, and how silly w should all have looked then."

" But it was all guess-work," retorted Matthew " unless you call it inspiration, and very inaccurat at that. If the author of Genesis had said that ma was made of sea-water, he would have been neare the truth."

" Well," said Waters, " he put the beginnings of li on the face of the waters, which wasn't so very far off.

" But how did life begin ? " I asked. " After all, ther is a difference between the Organic and the Inorganic Or there appears to be."

" That's for Waters to say," said Matthews.

"I can't be very didactic about that," said the emist. "But it appears possible that there was an olution from Inorganic to Organic through the olloids. We can't say much more, and we haven't— far—succeeded in producing it in the laboratory. atthews probably still believes that Mind is a func- on of Matter, but if he asks me to demonstrate it for m, I must beg to be excused. I can't even show that fe is a function of Matter."

"The Behaviourists seem to think that what looks e Intelligence and Freewill are merely mechanical sponses to material stimuli," I suggested.

"That's all very well," said Hoskyns, emerging with grin from a cloud of tobacco-smoke, "but all you eople talk so cheerfully about Matter, as if you knew hat it was. I don't, and it's more or less my job to now. Go back again, go past your colloids and your a-water. Go back to the dust of the earth and the ass of rotating cinders which was before the ocean en began. Go back to the sun, which threw the planets f so unexpectedly, owing to a rare accident which ight not happen in a million light-years. Go back to e nebula. Go back to the atom. Do some of the famous litting we hear so much about. Where is your Matter? isn't. It is a series of pushes or pulls or vortices in thingness. And as for your train of mechanical ausation, Matthews, when you come down to it, it solves itself into a series of purely fortuitous move- ents of something we can't define in a medium that esn't exist. Even your heredity-business is fortuitous. hy one set of chromosomes more than any other? our chain of causation would only be a real one if all ssible combinations and permutations were worked ut in practice. Something is going on, that is as certain

as anything can be—that is, I mean, it is the funda mental assumption we are bound to make in order t reason at all—but how it started or why it started just as mysterious as it was when the first thoughtfu savage invented a god to explain it."

"Why should it ever have started at all?" sai Matthews. "As Matter passes from one form to anothe so forces change from one to another. Why should w suppose a beginning—or an end if it comes to that Why not a perpetually shifting kaleidoscope, goin through all its transformations and starting again?

"Why, my lad," replied Hoskyns, "because in tha case you will come slap up against the second law o thermodynamics, and that will be the end of you."

"Oh!" said Mr. Perry, "the formula that start so charmingly about 'Nothing in the statistics of a assemblage'—that appears to be all the Law and th Prophets nowadays."

"Yes," said Hoskyns. "Its general meaning i that Time only works in one direction, and that whe all the permutations and combinations have been ru through, Time will stop, because there will be nothin further by which we can distinguish its direction All the possibilities will have been worked out, al the electrons will have been annihilated, and ther will be nothing more for them to do and no radian energy left for them to do it with. That is why ther must be an end. And if an end, presumably a begin ning."

"And the end is implicit in the beginning?" said I

"Yes; but the intermediate stages are not inevit able in detail, only overwhelmingly probable in th gross. There, Perry, if you like, you can reconcil Foreknowledge with Freewill."

"Life, then, I suppose, is just one more element of randomness," said I, "in the randomness of things."

"Presumably," said Hoskyns.

There was a pause.

"What is Life?" I asked, suddenly.

"Well, Pontius," said Waters, "if we could answer that question we should probably not need to ask the others. At present—chemically speaking—the nearest definition I can produce is that it is a kind of bias—a lop-sidedness, so to speak. Possibly that accounts for its oddness."

"I've said that kind of thing myself," I said, rather astonished, "just as a sort of feeble witticism. Have I hit on something true by accident?"

"More or less. That is to say, it is true that, up to the present, it is only living substance that has found the trick of transforming a symmetric, optically inactive compound into a single, asymmetric, optically active compound. At the moment that Life appeared on this planet, something happened to the molecular structure of things. They got a twist, which nobody has ever succeeded in reproducing mechanically—at least, not without an exercise of deliberate selective intelligence, which is also, as I suppose you'll allow, a manifestation of Life."

"Thank you," said Perry. "Do you mind saying the first part over again, in words that a child could understand?"

"Well, it's like this," said Waters. "When the planet cooled, the molecules of that original inorganic planetary matter were symmetric—if crystallised, the crystals were symmetric also. That is, they were alike on both sides, like a geometrical cube, and their reversed or mirror-images would be identical with

themselves. Substances of this kind are said to be op tically inactive ; that is to say, if viewed through th polariscope, they have no power to rotate the beam o polarised light."

"We will take your word for it," said Perry.

"Oh, well, that's quite simple. Ordinarily speaking the vibrations in the æther—need I explain æther?"

"I wish you could," said Hoskyns.

"We will pass æther," said Perry.

"Thank you. Well, ordinarily the ætheric vibra tions which propagate the light take place in all direc tions at right angles to the path of the ray. If yo pass the ray through a crystal of Iceland spar, thes vibrations are all brought into one plane, like a fla ribbon. That is what is called a beam of polarise light. Very well, then. If you pass this polarise light through a substance whose molecular structur is symmetric, nothing happens to it ; the substanc is optically inactive. But if you pass it through, say a solution of cane sugar, the beam of polarised ligh will be twisted, and you will get a spiral effect, lik twisting a strip of paper either to the right or to th left. The cane sugar is optically active. And why Because its molecular structure is asymmetric. Th crystals of sugar are not fully developed. There is a irregularity on one side, and the crystal and its mirro image are reversed, like my right hand and my left." He laid the palm of the right hand on the back of th left, to show his meaning. We all frowned and practise on our own hands.

"Very good," continued Waters. "Now, we ca produce in the laboratory, by synthesis from inorgani substances, other substances which were at one tim thought to be only the products of living tissues—

camphor, for instance, and some of the alkaloids used in medicine. But what is the difference between our process and that of Nature? What happens is this. The substance produced by synthesis always appears in what is called a racemic form. It consists of two sets of substances—one set having its asymmetry right-handed and the other, left-handed, so that the product as a whole behaves like an inorganic, symmetric compound; that is, its two asymmetries cancel one another out, and the product is optically inactive and has no power to rotate the beam of polarised light. To get a substance exactly equivalent to the natural product, we have to split it into its two asymmetric forms. We can't do that mechanically. We can do it by the exercise of our living intelligence, of course, by laboriously picking out the crystals. Or we can do it by swallowing the substance, when our bodies will absorb and digest the dextro-rotating form of, for example, glucose, and pass the lævo-rotating form out unchanged. Or we can get a living fungus to do it for us, such as blue mould, which will feed on and destroy the dextro-rotatory half of the racemic form of paratartaric acid and leave unchanged the lævo-rotatory half, which is the artificial, laboratory-made half. But we can't, by one mechanical laboratory process, turn an inorganic, inactive, symmetric compound into one single, asymmetric, optically active compound—and that is what living matter will do cheerfully, day by day."

Waters finished his exposition with a smart little thump of the fist on the table. I knew what that was. It was the postman's knock, bringing the answer to that letter of mine. A horrid sinking feeling at the solar plexus warned me that in a very few minutes I should have to ask a question. Why need I do it? The subject

was remote and difficult. I could easily pretend not to understand. If there really was a difference between the synthetic and the natural product, it was not my business to investigate it. Waters was changing the subject. He had gone back to the first day of creation. Hang him ! Let him stay there !

" So that, as Professor Japp said, as long ago as 1898, ' The phenomena of stereo-chemistry support the doctrine of vitalism as revived by the younger physiologists, and point to the existence of a directive force, which enters upon the scene with Life itself and which, in no way violating the laws of the kinetics of atoms '—that ought to comfort you, Hoskyns—' determines the course of their operation within the living organism. That is that at the moment when Life first arose, a directive force came into play—a force of precisely the same character as that which enables the intelligent operator, by the exercise of his will, to select one crystallised enantiomorph and reject its asymmetric opposite.' I learnt that passage by heart once, as a safeguard against cocksureness and a gesture of proper humility in face of my subject."

" In other words," said Matthews, " you believe in miracles, and something appearing out of nowhere. I am sorry to find you on the side of the angels."

" It depends what you mean by miracles. I think there is an intelligence behind it all. Else, why anything at all ? "

" You have Jeans on your side anyway," put in Hoskyns. " He says, ' Everything points with overwhelming force to a definite event, or series of events, of creation at some time or times, not infinitely remote. The universe cannot have originated by chance out of its present ingredients.' I can't tell you what

produced the first molecules of gas, and you can't tell me what produced the first asymmetric molecules of Life. The parson here may think he knows."

"I don't know," said Perry, "but I give it a name. I call it God. You don't know what the æther is, but you give it a name, and deduce its attributes from its behaviour. Why shouldn't I do likewise? You people are making it all very much easier for me."

It was no good. I had to ask my question. I burst in, violently, inappropriately, on this theological discussion:

"You mean to tell me," I said, "that it is possible to differentiate a substance produced synthetically in the laboratory from one produced by living tissue?"

"Certainly," said Waters, turning to me in some surprise, but apparently accepting my tardy realisation of this truth as a mere vagary of my slow and unscientific wits. "So long, of course, as the artificial substance remains in the first or racemic form, for this would be optically inactive, while that from the living tissues would rotate the beam of polarised light, when viewed in the polariscope. If, however, that racemic form had been already split up by the intelligent operator, or some other living agency, into its two dextro- and lævo-rotatory forms, it would be impossible to distinguish between them."

I saw a path of escape opening up. Surely the synthetic muscarine at St. Anthony's would have had this other operation performed on it. There was no reason at all why I should interfere. I relapsed into silence, and the conversation wandered on.

I was recalled to myself by a movement about me. Matthews was explaining that he had to be getting home. Waters rose to accompany him. In a minute

he would be gone and the opportunity lost. I had only to sit still.

I got up. I made my fatuous farewells. I said I had a perfectly good wife to go home to. I thanked my host and said how much I had enjoyed the evening. I followed the other men out into the narrow hall, with its loaded umbrella-stand and ugly, discoloured wall-paper.

"Dr. Waters," I said.

"Yes?" He turned smiling towards me. I must say something now, or he would think me a fool.

"May I have a word with you?"

"By all means. Which way do you go?"

"Bloomsbury," said I, hoping desperately that he lived at Hendon or Harringay.

"Excellent, I am going that way myself. Shall we share a taxi?"

I murmured something about Professor Matthews.

"No, no," said he, "I'm going by tube to Earl's Court."

We found our taxi and got in.

"Well, now?" said Waters.

I was in for it now. I told him the whole story.

"By God," he said, "that's damned interesting. Fine idea for a murder. Of course, any jury in the country would be only too ready to believe it was accident. Tempting Providence, and all that. And unless your man was fool enough to use the synthetic muscarine in its racemic form, you know, I'm very much afraid he's pulled it off. There's a chance, of course. They may not have gone further than that. Why didn't you ask Benton while you were about it?"

"I thought of doing so," I admitted. "At least,

didn't know about this racemic business, but I hought there might be some way of telling the arti- cial stuff from the real. But Harrison seemed satis- ed——"

"He would be. I know these people. Wrapped p in their own subjects. An engineer—*he* ought to now something about molecular structure. But no. He's no occasion to study Organic, so it doesn't occur o him that there's anything to know about it. The vord of a first-year student at Anthony's is enough or him. You have more imagination. Why didn't ou——?"

"I don't know that I quite wanted to."

"Let bad alone, eh? But damn it, it's interesting. say, what a scoop for the papers, if it comes off! First murderer ever caught by the polariscope.' Better than Crippen and the wireless. Only they'll ave a bit of a job explaining it. Now, look here, vhat are we going to do about it? Who did the nalysis?"

"Lubbock."

"Oh, yes—Home office man, of course. We'll have o get on to him. It's a chance if he's kept the stuff y him. What? Oh, he has. That's all right then. We've only got to take a squint at it and then we hall know. I mean, if the stuff really is racemic, we hall know. If not, we never shall. What's the time? Quarter-past eleven. No time like the present. Here, driver!"

He thrust his head out of the window and gave n address in Woburn Square.

"It's all on our way, and Lubbock never goes to ed before midnight. I know him well. He'll be keen n this."

His energy swept me up, feebly protesting, and in a few minutes' time we were standing on Sir James Lubbock's doorstep, ringing the bell.

The door was opened by a manservant, of whom Waters inquired whether Sir James was at home.

"No, sir. He is working late to-night, sir, at the Home Office. I think it's this arsenic case, sir."

"Oh, of course. That's luck for us, Mr. Munting. We'll run down and catch him there. You might give him a ring, Stevens, and say I'm coming down to see him on an urgent matter. You know who I am?"

"Oh, yes, sir. Dr. Waters. Very good, sir. You'll find him in the laboratory, sir."

"Right. We'd better hurry up, or we may just miss him."

We plunged back into the taxi.

"Shall we find any difficulty in getting in?"

"Oh, no. I've been there before. We're making very good time. Provided he hadn't started before Stevens got through to him, he'll wait for us. Ah! here we are."

We drew up at a side door in the big Government building. After a short colloquy with the man on duty, we were passed through. I stumbled at Waters' heels through a number of dreary corridors, till we fetched up in a kind of small ante-room.

"I feel strongly persuaded," I said, "that I am on a visit to the dentist."

"And you hope very much he'll say there's nothing to be done to you this time. I, on the contrary, hope very much that it's something malignant and unusual. Have a fag."

I accepted the fag. I tried to think of Harrison,

erishing horribly in his lonely shack, but instead could only see Lathom with his hair rumpled and is teeth set, painting with his usual careless brilliance. got the idea that God or Nature or Science or some ther sinister and powerful thing had set a trap for him, nd that I was pushing him into it. I thought it was uthless of God or whoever it was. Pom, pomty ; pom, omty ; pom, pomty ; pom, pomty—I was nervously umming something and I couldn't think what. Oh, es—Haydn's *Creation*—that bit where the kettle-rums thump so gently, so ruthlessly, on one note—And-the-spi-rit-of-God (pomty) moved-upon-the-ace-of-the-waters-(pom) "—only apparently it wasn't ne spirit of God, but an asymmetric molecule, which idn't fit the rhythm. Somebody was walking down ne corridor, with a soft, muffled beat, rather like ettle-drums. " Let there be light (pomty-pom) and here was——"

The door opened.

I recognised Sir James Lubbock at once, of course, hough now, in a white overall and pair of crimson arpet slippers, he presented an appearance less point-evise than he had done at the inquest. He greeted Vaters cordially and received my name with a faint ook of puzzledom.

" Mr. Munting ? Yes—let me see, haven't we met efore ? "

I reminded him of Manaton.

" Of course, of course. I knew I knew your face. Ir. Munting, the novelist. Delighted to make your cquaintance under more pleasant auspices."

" I don't know that they are much more pleasant," aid Waters. " As a matter of fact, it's the Harrison ase we wanted to see you about."

"Really? Has something fresh turned up? You know, the other day I had a letter from the man's son. Rather an odd letter. He seemed to have got the idea that there was more in the case than met the eye. Hinted that we might have found something else—strychnine or something. Quite ridiculous of course. There wasn't the faintest doubt about the cause of death. Muscarine poisoning. Perfectly straightforward."

"Just so. By the way, Lubbock, did it by any chance occur to you to give that muscarine the once over with the polariscope?"

"With the polariscope? Good heavens, no. Why should it? That wouldn't tell one anything. You know all about muscarine. Dextro-rotatory. Nothing abstruse about it."

"Oh, quite. But we've been having a little discussion, and—as a matter of fact, Lubbock, it would relieve Mr. Munting's mind—and mine—considerably if you would just check up on that point."

"Well, if you insist, there's nothing easier. But what's the mystery?"

"Nothing at all, probably. Just an extra bit of collateral evidence, that's all."

"You've got something at the back of your mind Waters. Can't I be allowed to know?"

"I'll tell you after you've done it."

Sir James Lubbock shook his handsome grey head.

"That's Waters all over. He's like Sherlock Holmes. Never can resist a touch of the dramatic."

"No," said Waters. "It's just native caution. Don't want to commit myself and be made to look foolish."

"Oh, well, come along and we'll get it over."

"Aren't we interrupting your work?" I said. I ope this question was prompted by politeness, but think I spoke in a vain hope of delaying the crisis.

"Not a bit. I'd just finished—was packing up, in ct, when I got your message."

We traversed some more corridors and eventually ame out into a large laboratory, faintly lit by a ngle electric bulb. An attendant was just locking cupboard. He turned as he saw us.

"It's all right, Denis. I'll see to things. You can ot away home."

"Very well. Good night, Sir James."

"Good night."

Sir James switched on some more lights, flooding ie gaunt room with what Poe has called somewhere "ghastly and inappropriate splendour." Stepping cross to a tall cupboard labelled with his name, he nlocked it with a key that hung upon his watch-iain.

"Here's my Bluebeard's chamber," he said, smiling. Relics of all kinds of crimes and tragedies. Bottled urders. Bottled suicides. Plenty of plots for novels ere, Mr. Munting."

I said I supposed so.

"Here we are. Harrison. Extract from stomach. xtract from vomit. Extract from dish of fungus. Which is it you particularly want, Waters?"

"Doesn't matter. Try the extract from the dish fungus. It'll be less open to—that is, it is possibly etter for our purpose. What's this, Lubbock?"

"That? Oh, that's a fresh solution of muscarine I ade myself for control purposes, to assist in deter-ining the strength."

"Made from the fungus?"

"Yes. I don't altogether guarantee that I've iso lated the principle. But it's near enough."

"Oh, yes. I'd like to have a look at that, too, I may."

"By all means."

He brought the bottles out and set them on one the laboratory tables. In appearance they were indis tinguishable—the same white salt that I had seen be fore in the laboratory at St. Anthony's.

Sir James Lubbock unlocked another cupboard, an produced a large, heavy instrument, rather like a tele scope fixed to a stand. He put it down beside the tw bottles and departed in search of water. While he wa preparing solutions from the respective bottles muscarine, Waters turned to me.

"You'd better have this quite clear in your mind— I mean, you'd like to know what you may expect t see, exactly."

"Yes," I said. "At present I feel rather like th good lady in *The Moonstone*, who wanted to know when the explosion would take place."

"I'm afraid it won't be so exciting as that. Chee up, man, you look as white as a sheet. At the furthe end of the instrument is a thin plate of the semi transparent mineral, tourmaline. You've seen it i jewellers' shops. Pretty stuff, and all that, and, wha is more to the purpose, it has a very finely foliate structure. In a ray of ordinary light, the vibration take place in all directions, but when passed through a slice of tourmaline they are confined to one plane and the light is then polarised. We talked about tha at dinner—you remember. This slice of tourmaline i called the polariser. Right. Now at this end, near th eye-piece, is a second slice of tourmaline, which ca

e rotated, and which is called the analyser. Now, hen the analyser is turned so that its foliations are arallel to those of the polariser, light will pass through oth, but if the analyser is turned so that its foliations re at right angles to those of the polariser, then no ght will pass and there will be darkness. All clear so ar?"

"Perfectly."

"Very well. Now, if, when the analyser is thus rned to darkness, I place the solution of an optically ctive substance between the two slices of tourmaline he light will—you can tell me that yourself—it's a *and* of light, remember."

"I remember. Yes. The band of light will be rotated s it passes through."

"That's right. It will come round into line with the liations of the analyser, and——"

"Come through!" said I, triumphantly.

"Thank God for a man of intelligent mind. As you ghtly say, it will come through. And therefore you ill see——"

"Light!" said I.

(Pom, pompty; pom, pompty—if I could have got d of that relentless drum-beat. My heart seemed to e going very heavily too.)

"But if," went on Waters, with his eye on Sir James, ho was stirring his solutions with a glass rod over the nk, "if the substance should be optically inactive—, for example, it should turn out to be a synthetic roduct, prepared from inorganic substances in the aboratory—then it will not rotate the beam of olarised light. The darkness will persist."

I saw that.

"Well, now you perfectly understand. If, when we

put the muscarine solution in the polariscope, we g
light, it proves nothing. Either the stuff is natural, c
else the synthetic preparation has already been spl
up into its two active forms, and we can make no pr
nouncement about it. But if we get darkness—then it
a pretty dark business, Mr. Munting."

I nodded.

" Well, Waters," said Sir James, cheerfully, " finishe
your lecture ? "

" Quite. The pupil is highly commended."

" Good. Now, I'm in your hands, Waters. What d
you want me to do ? "

" I think we'll have the control solution first, if yo
don't mind. Now, Mr. Munting, you will see how th
substance, prepared from the living tissue of a fungu
rotates the beam of polarised light. Right you are, sir.

Sir James handed me a glass cylinder, filled with
colourless solution. I sniffed at it, but it had no smel

" I shouldn't taste it if I were you," said Sir Jame
a little grimly. He struck a match and lit a Bunse
burner, the flame of which played upon a small ma
of something held above it by a platinum projectio

" Sodium chloride," said Waters, " in fact, not t
make unnecessary mystery about it, common sal
Shall I switch off ? "

He snapped off the lights, and we were left with onl
the sodium flame. In that green, sick glare a fac
floated close to mine—a corpse-face—livid, waxe
stamped with decay—sharp-shadowed in the nostri
and under the orbits—Harrison's face, as I had seen
in " The Shack," opening a black mouth of complain

" Spectacular, isn't it ? " said Sir James, pleasantl
and I pulled myself together and realised that I mu
look just as ghastly to him as he to me. But for th

ıoment the face had been Harrison's, and from that ıoment, Lathom was nothing to me any more.

Sir James settled down to his experiment with comɔrtable deliberation. He placed the cylinder containıg the solution in the polariscope, adjusted the eyeiece and looked. Then he turned to Waters.

"So far," he said, dryly, "the laws of Nature appear ɔ hold good. Do you want to see?"

"I should like Mr. Munting to see," said Waters.

Here you are. Wait a minute. We'll take the cylinder ut for a moment. Come along. You shall do it yourelf."

My heart *was* thumping. To my excited imaginaion it seemed to shake the table as I took Sir James's lace before the polariscope.

"We'll start," said Waters, "with the analyser arallel to the polariser. Right you are. You see your eam of light? Now here's the adjustment. Turn it ourself."

I turned it, and the light vanished.

"Hold on to it," said Waters, cheerfully, "so that ou can be sure there's no hanky-panky. I'm putting he muscarine solution in again. Now then!"

As he slipped the glass cylinder into place the circle f light returned.

"Yes," I said, "I see it."

"Convincing demonstration of a miracle," said Vaters, "and the lopsidedness of things in general. That's all right, then. Now we'll have a look at the uff that killed Harrison. No. Respect for our goverors, teachers, spiritual pastors and masters. We'll let ir James have a go first."

Sir James, with a shrug, took my place at the instruıent. Waters put his hand on my arm.

With maddening deliberation, the analyst set th first cylinder carefully on one side and took up th other. My mouth was dry as I watched him. He pu the cylinder into the polariscope and looked. Ther was a pause. Then a grunt. Then his hand came up feeling for the adjustment. There was another paus and an exclamation of impatience. Then his eye wa jerked back from the eye-piece and his head peere round to examine the exterior of the instrumen Waters' grip on my arm became painful in its tigh ness. Sir James's hand came round again, feeling, th time, for the cylinder. He took it out, held it up, looke at it and replaced it with very great care. He looke again, and there was a long silence.

Then came Sir James's voice, queer and puzzled.

" I say, Waters. There's something funny here. Jus have a look, will you ? "

With a final squeeze, Waters loosened his grip of m and took Sir James's place before the instrument. H moved the cylinder back and forth once or twice an said, in a judicial tone, " Well ! "

" What do you make of that ? " said Sir James.

" One of two things," said Waters, briskly, " eithe it's a suspension of the laws of Nature, or this muscarin of yours is optically inactive. I hesitate to suggest suspension of the laws of Nature."

" What *do* you suggest ? " demanded Sir James.

" I suggest," said Waters, " that this is a syntheti preparation in racemic form."

" But how could—— ? " Sir James broke off, and i the corpse-light I watched his face as he revolved th possibilities in his mind. " You know what that mean Waters."

" I might hazard a guess."

"Murder."

"Yes, murder."

There was another pause, in which the silence seemed o become absolutely solid. Then Sir James said, very oftly :

"The man was murdered. My God, this is a lesson o me, Waters. Never to overlook anything. Who vould ever have thought——? But that's no excuse. shall have to—I must verify it first, though. Do he preparations again. But—what put you on to his?"

"Let's go and get a drink," said Waters, "and we'll ell you all about it. You'd better have a look at this irst, Mr. Munting."

I looked through the instrument. Dead blackness. But if the thing had shown all the colours of the rain-ow, I should have been in no state to draw any con-lusions from it. I sat stunned while somebody switched n the lights, extinguished the Bunsen burner and ocked all the apparatus up again.

Then I found myself straggling after the other two, vhile they talked about something or the other. I had n idea that I came into it, and presently Waters turned ack and thrust his arm into mine.

"What you want," he said, "is a double Scotch, nd no soda."

I don't very well remember getting home, but that, think, was not due to the double Scotch, but to be-vilderment of mind. I do remember waking my wife p and blurting out my story in a kind of confused nisery, which must have perplexed and alarmed her. And I remember saying that it was quite useless to

think of going to bed, because I should never sleep. And I remember waking this morning, very late, with the feeling that someone was dead.

I have written all this down. I don't know whether it is necessary, because, of course, Sir James will be doing something about it by now. But I promised a statement, and here it is.

One other thing has happened. As I was reading it through to see if it was coherent, the telephone rang. My wife answered it. I heard her say :

" Yes ?—Yes ?—Yes—Who is it speaking, please ?—Oh, yes—I'm not sure—I'll go and see—Will you hold the line a minute ? "

She put her hand over the mouthpiece and said, almost in a whisper :

" It's Mr. Lathom, asking to speak to you."

" Oh, God ! " I said.

If I warned him now—there would still be time—and the man had been at school with me—and we had lived in the same rooms—and he was a great painter—something would be lost to the world if they hanged Lathom.

Elizabeth did nothing. She stood with the receiver in her hand.

" Tell him——"

" Yes ? "

" Tell him I am out."

She turned back to the instrument.

" I am so sorry, my husband is out. Can I give any message ? No, very well. You'll ring up again. Good night."

She came over and stood by me.

"Elizabeth, tell me, am I an unutterable sweep?"
"No. There was nothing else you could do."

I want to know whether Lathom knows the sort of woman he did it for. I want to know how much she really knows or suspects. I want to know whether, when she wrote that letter which drove him to do it, he was deceiving him or herself. I want to know whether, in all these months, he has been thinking that she was worth it, or whether, in a ghastly disillusionment, he has realised that the only real part of her was vulgar and bad, and the rest merely the brilliant refraction of himself. What is the good? Whatever he realised, he must have gone on telling himself she was worth it, or he would have gone mad.

Perry would say that this was God's judgment. Life, outraged, vindicating itself against the powers of death and hell. Or no, Perry expressly refuses to recognise judgments. Besides, if Lathom had known just a little more about chemistry, he could have defeated the judgment. Ignorance is no excuse in law. Nor in the law of Nature. Well, we know that. All the same, if I were in Lathom's place, I should hate to have been tripped up by a miserable asymmetric molecule.

I hope Lathom will not ring up again.

3. *Note by Paul Harrison*

This statement concludes the evidence which I have to lay before you. You have already, I understand, received a brief communication from Sir James Lubbock, confirming the account of his experiment with

the synthetic muscarine. Munting's narrative is of som value as indicating the lines on which such an experi mental proof, though unusual and somewhat technica in character, might be presented to a jury of reasonabl intelligent persons.

The unsatisfactory part of the case is, as you will see that which concerns the woman, Margaret Harrison As the letter No. 46 shows, she has taken pains to protec herself against any suspicion of complicity. Although morally, she is quite equally guilty with Lathom, an though I have personally no doubt that the letter i an impudent hypocrisy, it will probably be difficul to bring home to her a guilty knowledge of the actua commission of the crime. That she instigated and in spired it is, to my mind, certain ; but Lathom wil strenuously deny this, and I have failed to secure an reliable evidence against her. I trust that you will us every possible endeavour to prevent this abominabl woman from getting off scot-free.

I re-open this parcel to add that I have receive a message from Mrs. Cutts. Lathom, she tells me has given a week's notice to his landlord. This ma mean everything or nothing, but prompt action seem advisable.

Sir Gilbert Pugh, Director of Public Prosecutions, turne the last page of the manuscript, and sat for a few minutes i silence. Mentally, he watched his expert witnesses displayin an asymmetric molecule to a jury of honest tradesmen, unde a withering fire of commentary by the counsel for the defence.

He sighed. This sort of case always meant a lot of work an bother.

" *Simmons !* "
" *Yes, sir.*"
" *Get me the Chief Commissioner on the 'phone.*"

[Pinned to the portfolio at some subsequent date.]

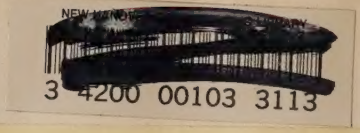
Extract from the " Morning Express " of November 30th, 1930

MANATON MURDERER HANGED

The execution took place in Exeter Gaol, at 8 a.m. ›-day, of Harwood Lathom, who was convicted in)ctober of the murder of George Harrison at " The hack," Manaton, by poisoning him with muscarine.

THE END

21 DAY BOOK



Sayers, Dorothy L
Clouds of witness
and the document case.

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